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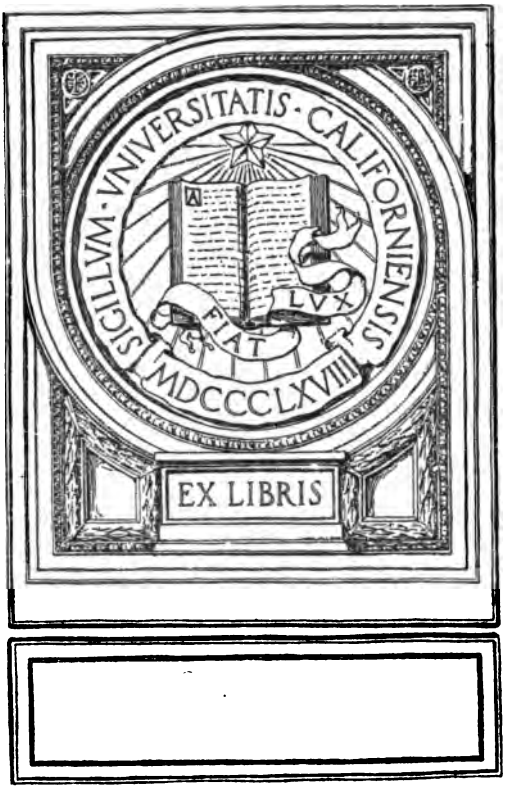
CARLA WENCKEBACH

PIONEER

V. MÜLLER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CARLA WENCKEBACH

Pioneer

BY

MARGARETHE MÜLLER

Höchstes Glück der Erdenkinder
Ist nur die Persönlichkeit.

GOETHE

Portrait of 1897

GINN AND COMPANY
BOSTON AND LONDON
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1918

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TO HER PUPILS
AND MINE

256352

FOREWORD

MY first and foremost reason for writing this biographical sketch has been an ardent desire to share a precious possession,—a possession that has come to me through intimate knowledge and deep appreciation of a very unusual, very vital human being. The joy of the human mind in distinct personality, that "highest bliss of earth-born beings," as Goethe calls it, is undying; and if through what I recount of Carla Wenckebach I succeed in evoking in my readers even a passing gleam of the glad delight I myself experience in contemplating her, that gleam will be my reward.

A secondary incentive for writing these memoirs has been the wish to furnish an historic document of a life which, though it may not be as truly typical as it is markedly individual, nevertheless represents a type of seemingly increasing prominence,—that of the woman in whose mental make-up sex does not appear to be of prime and decisive importance. I do not refer to the mannish woman,—that ephemeral product of hybrid civilization,—but to the woman whose instincts and interests are intellectual rather than domestic; one who marries if *the* man comes her way, but other-

wise "hunts" congenial activity in preference to man or motherhood. To this interesting and happy enough variation of womankind, gallant Uncle Sam has long granted an important share in public activities, while "Brother Michel" still holds aloof. Among the hundreds, or shall I say thousands, of brave, restless German women who during the latter half of the last century left the Fatherland in order to seek larger, freer fields of activity in foreign countries, none perhaps has done more for her own people or won more distinction in her new home than Carla Wenckebach. Yet none could have been less conscious of her own achievement,—and this fact has given added zest to my work as biographer.

In regard to material I have been unusually fortunate in being able to gather largely from Fräulein Wenckebach's nearest friends and relatives, including her mother, who died only recently; and there were many other people available from whom I have extorted their last bit of information. Through frequent and prolonged visits in East Frisia, her home in Northern Germany, I have become familiar with the customs and traditions of the country and with the personnel of its sturdy inhabitants, whose national motto is, *Éala fréa Frésena!* "Hail to thee, free Frisian!" Myself a native

of Hannover, I was also thoroughly at home in the atmosphere that surrounded her during her school days there and in Hildesheim. And for the period between these school days and her career at Wellesley, I had overwhelmingly rich treasures of manuscript. Most of the quotations I have given are from letters to her family. I have also made frequent use of an autobiographical manuscript novel, which, for the sake of convenience, I have referred to as "notes."

The most disheartening drawback to my work of biographer has been that circumstances compelled me to interpret a subject so thoroughly German through the medium of a language not my mother tongue; and that whenever I wanted to quote, I have had to translate. And here I must confess that it was often impossible to render into English all the quaint peculiarities of Carla Wenckebach's style, the strength, the picturesqueness, the raciness of wit on the one hand, and the involved constructions, mixed metaphors, and untranslatable puns on the other. Need I say that I have not been so careful to reproduce the faults of her style as to bring out its beauties? In all other respects I have tried to be faithful to my ideal of uncompromising veracity of presentation,—a veracity

such as only a lovingly close yet artistically detached view-point could make possible. I have also followed my predilection for such manner of treatment as Thackeray describes when he says, "I would have history familiar rather than heroic."

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PART I
THE CHILD

A sunny childhood . . . had stored up in him an inexhaustible treasure of inner serenity. Pessimism has never entirely possessed a soul who can keep the memory of golden days of youth to brighten life when darkness sets in.

B. M. MEYER'S "GOETHE."

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I

IT was on St. Valentine's Day in the ancient city of Hildesheim, and in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty-three, that Life played fairy godmother to the Royal Hannoverian Deputy Postmaster Carl Georg Christian Wenckebach and his wife Marie Sophie Dorothea. Just after the bell from the thousand-year-old cathedral (the "Dom") near by had struck midnight, there appeared in the green-curtained family cradle a pair of rosy twins,—the first, so the chronicler reports, marking the event with a lively kick and a joyous crow, the other following in demure silence and with limbs tired from waiting.

Before two weeks were over, the little late-comer had gone out of the world as quietly as she had entered it, and her more robust sister was left sole possessor of the cradle which, until the twins came, had been occupied by Claus, the eldest born, a blond-haired and blue-eyed boy of two.

The baby, rolled up in her swaddling-clothes, looked, we suppose, much like other babies of the time,—a time that did not allow much freedom of motion of any kind and tied up its infants as securely in swathing-bands as it did its adults in enthralling

bonds of reactionary laws. All the approved instruments of torture devised for the agony of infants, —the stiff linen cap, the coarse fustian jacket, the narrow bag for the feet, and the long, stiff knitted band intended to be wound round and round the soft little body to give it "stability,"—all these, we may be sure, were inflicted on our baby. Her fitness for survival was further tested by a number of hot and heavy feather beds massed underneath and on top of the little martyr. The consequence was that in spite of her natural vigor she succumbed and threatened to go the way of her twin. But after a few weeks she rallied again so quickly that, much to the satisfaction of Frau Marie, the day set apart for the jolly celebration of her baptism did not need to be postponed at all beyond "decent" limits. The little heathen was only seven weeks old when they took her to the Protestant church of St. Andrew's, the same in which John Bugenhagen of old had preached his first sermon of heresy. Here the four godmothers, the four wives of four Royal Hanoverian Deputy Postmasters, standing round the magnificent old font, not only promised to watch over the child's spiritual welfare, but in addition gave her their four Christian names,—Anna, Doris, Amalie, Katharine.

She was called by none of these names, however, for the parents did not like them, much as they may have valued their possessors. They preferred the old pagan name of Cató to the Christian Katharine; and because, even to the hardy Frisian ear, Cató sounded rather too severe for a soft little baby, they changed it into the Frisian pet name of Tösi. Cató-Tösi she was, then, and Cató-Tösi she remained until— but that belongs in another chapter.

Tösi was a good child: she slept like her favorite playmate, the kitten, and ate with much gusto, never overdoing in either. There was no fussiness about her, and she was never heard to scream except when the food did not appear at the accustomed hour, or when the older brother petted her too much or dealt her an unexpected blow. She had none of the dainty, gingerly ways of little Claus, who wept when he got his hands or his clothes soiled, and who could play for hours making finery for his dolls. Tösi, to his disgust, rather enjoyed dirt, and was happiest when she could romp on the floor with Mieseken, the cat, or could make mud pies with the street urchins in the courtyard behind the gabled house.

Soon it appeared, though the mother's devoted love for her firstborn would hardly have let her

acknowledge it, that Tösi was an unusually clever child. When she was scarcely more than fifteen months old she had mastered the rudiments of a practical German vocabulary. One of her greatest delights, moreover, was to sit on her father's lap, repeating the big words that he rolled out for her, —words, maybe, like *Podbielski*, *Sebastopol*, *Unabhängigkeitskampf*, and others that were in the air at that time. Such words, pronounced with ever varying intonations and in surprisingly novel combinations, were as interesting to Tösi as his dolls were to Claus. She would sing them, shout them, whisper them to the cradle, the walls, the kitten, whenever she felt herself unobserved. And what better game could there have been devised for a future orator!

II

THE Fates smiled on the little blond-haired and blue-eyed family in the modest apartment of the picturesque old Hildesheim house, and spun them a series of peaceful, uneventful days and months and years. Herr Wenckebach, a handsome, middle-aged man, and his buxom Frau Marie, the younger sister of his deceased first wife, were a happily matched couple, whose even tempers and simple, quiet ways harmoniously enveloped the budding lives about them. They had both been accustomed to hard times and frugal living from their childhood up, and now enjoyed their little share of ease and peace with grateful hearts. Out of the four hundred and fifty dollars that a Royal Government paid its Royal Postmaster per annum, they could squeeze a wonderful amount of solid comfort and enjoyment. Even an occasional trip to Hannover, the capital of the kingdom, lying fifteen miles south of Hildesheim, was not entirely out of the question. From time to time the eager Herr Postmeister, urged by domestic Frau Marie, would betake himself to this Eldorado to feast his mind on the exquisite performances at the court theater of George V, or to quicken his soul in the strains

of Joachim's wonderful violin. There was a hunger in him for things beautiful and intellectual that his humdrum life of a post-official only intensified. His forefathers as far back as the fifteenth century had all been university men,—lawyers, judges, mayors, and the like,—but he, like many men of his time, had been cheated out of the university education in consequence of the terrible poverty that Germany's wars with Napoleon had brought down on her sons. He never complained about his lot, however, partly because he had an unusual amount of good Frisian common sense, and partly, too, because he knew that kind Fate had a piece of good fortune in store for him.

In the Wenckebachs' *gute Stube* there hung, a little apart from the family daguerreotypes with which the wall under the sofa mirror was covered, a picture of goodly size bearing a conspicuous air of distinction. It was a holiday treat for the children to be admitted to this "best room,"—Frau Marie's sanctuary of furniture worship,—and, high in their father's arms, to get a good look at "*the* big picture." This was a fine reproduction of an excellent oil painting, the original of which may still be seen in the museum of Emden, the capital of East Frisia. It represents a man of about forty-

five whose firm chin, fair complexion, light blond hair, and dark blue eyes betray the Wenckebach. Something, however, in the curve of his exquisitely chiseled mouth, in the half playful, half ironical look of his eyes, in the curls carefully rolled up over his delicately fashioned ears, in the fastidious nonchalance with which his neckwear is arranged, marks him out from the company of wooden-looking Frisian dignitaries on the walls of the museum, as it set him apart from his surroundings in the stiff little parlor at Hildesheim.

This was "Uncle Wenckebach," the cultivated and courtly chief of the family clan, whom his relatives of more heroic character had good-naturedly nicknamed "Mademoiselle Wenckebach," not only on account of his grace and daintiness, but also on account of his Dutch wife and other anti-Frisian eccentricities. The living reality behind the picture, however, had meanwhile grown to be a decrepit old man, who, over his knitting,—an occupation to which blindness had reduced him,—slowly nodded himself to sleep.

News reached the Hildesheim post-office in the fall of 1854 that Uncle Wenckebach, officially known as Johann Heinrich Georg Wenckebach, had died, and that his nephew, Carl Georg Christian,

was now "lord" of the fine family estate * in Upgant, East Frisia.

The Herr Postmeister was calmly satisfied that kind Nature had taken her course, and had finally delivered his uncle and him from their respective burdens. But Frau Marie's heart leaped for joy and gratitude at the thought of being proprietress of a goodly portion of East Frisian soil, to which she clung even more tenaciously than did her husband. For she had grown up in a little country place,—which had been the home, too, of her postmaster,—and she loved the country, not so much perhaps for its own sake, as for the sake of her associations with it, and for the advantages it had over the city in the eyes of a devoted housewife. A new postmaster provided, Herr Wenckebach was ready to take himself and his family away from old Hildesheim.

* This estate, being a *fidei commis*, falls back into the possession of the state when the male branch of the family dies out.

III

IT was on a fine spring morning in 1855 that the little Frisian tribe, about whose "foreignness" the Hildesheimers had probably gossiped all the more because it had charmed them, were cheered away from the Hildesheim station with stiff German nosegays and ready German tears,—no journey in Germany could be ventured upon without the comfort of these. And the bitterest tears were shed, I am told, by two children,—by little Tösi, who had to leave her kitten behind, and by the substitute *pro tem* for the kitten,—a handsome, fair-haired girl of fourteen, who had to tear herself from a beloved mother in order to help earn bread for a fatherless family of nine by acting as a sort of nursery governess to the Wenckebach children. That this little maiden, who subsequently developed into a woman of rare power and insight, happened to become the chief guide and inspiration of Tösi's early years, was the first of those morsels of extra good luck with which a kind guardian angel favored his charge.

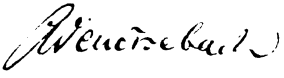
But on that sad day of parting Auguste Alfeis was only a child needing comfort as much as little Tösi did. So, when the first violent grief was over,

they comforted each other,—now as ever afterwards,—Auguste by giving, Tösi by contentedly taking what was offered. Later in life these gifts of Auguste to Tösi were the devotion of a generous nature, the wisdom of a lover of human hearts, the unconscious influence of a personality touched with genius. For the present, they were kindergarten songs which Claus had learned to sing in the little kindergarten of Auguste's mother, and kindergarten games, with which the untiring Auguste held the attention of both children and parents whenever the sport of seeing houses and fields and trees fly past the windows lost its attraction.

The end of the railway world in those days was Bremen. From there on, the jerking and jolting of the *Bummelzug* (cautious Frau Marie had been afraid to try a faster train) was exchanged for the jig-jog of the yellow mail-coach, by which our party passed now over the melancholy sands and moors, now through the rich forests and marshes of the duchy of Oldenburg, and found themselves in East Frisia just at sunrise.

How eagerly the travelers must have looked about them that morning! What they saw, we presume, was exactly what the modern traveler—as yet a *rara avis* in East Frisia—would see now in those

Portrait of 1873



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sea-girt lowlands,—fresh green meadows studded with sleek cattle; candle-shaped red church spires with red villages clustering about them; solitary farmsteads, their gabled roofs of thatch or tile protected against the fierce blasts of the north wind by a high hedge of close-set and neatly trimmed linden trees; gray poplars growing in stately independence; birches and hawthorn bushes clustering in cosy groups; long military lines of mountain ash or maple marking the conventional thoroughfares; and best and dearest of all, glistening canals with brown sails slowly gliding seaward, and windmills flapping their arms about in wild joy as they are wont to do whenever a child of the soil returns home.

In one of the little country towns,—there are no real cities in East Frisia,—the grandparents came to the mail tavern from the town where both the grandfathers ruled as magistrates, to shake hands with their children and to inspect the youngest generation of Wenckebachs.

And here Tösi disgraced herself—she would not kiss one of the grandmothers, the good, but stern-looking stepmother of Frau Marie, and she screamed at the sight of a crippled and disfigured relative. When her mother, applying some pedagogic mas-

sage, attempted to make her "behave," the tired and frightened child threw herself on the floor, kicking vehemently and shrieking out *Nein, nein, nein* with ever increasing temper. Parents and grandparents, to whom obedience was second nature, and who had an inborn dread of everything that savored of a "scene," stood by in helpless bewilderment at this unprecedented outburst of passion in their progeny. Young Auguste, however, picked up the kicker in her muscular arms and removed her from the sphere of unwelcome sights, such as birthmarks and crippled bodies, and out of range of these rasping Frisian voices, whose unaccustomed harshness had probably helped to frighten the sensitive child. When the two appeared again Tösi was radiantly happy, playing with the bright silver dollar that Auguste's mother had given her daughter for a mascot. This talisman worked such wonders on the little reprobate that on parting she was willing, though reluctantly, to save her reputation of a "good child" by waving a hasty "by-by" to the old folks.

At last the travelers reached the old church town of Marienhafe, near which the Wenckebach "Burg," as the villagers called it,—a stately, gray, tile-topped farmhouse,—was snugly situated in lordly

surroundings of groves and gardens. Through a gorgeous triumphal arch erected by the men and maids who were inherited with the place, they entered the imposing avenue of venerable chestnut trees leading to the manor house.

The men, in knickerbockers, high hats, and short jackets, shot off pistols in honor of the new master; the yellow-haired women, in dark, voluminous skirts, with gay ribbons and flowers in their black lace caps, and with funny feminine swallowtails on their jackets, dropped their best curtsies; while white-headed and barefooted children shyly peeped at the newcomers from behind the hawthorn hedges. There was no singing or reciting of poetry to welcome them, as there would have been in other parts of Germany on such occasions, for—as Tacitus of old truly observed—*Frisia non cantat.*

IV

THERE were five ponderous baldachined four-posters in the low and rambling gray house to receive the weary travelers. The one that awaited Frau Marie and her husband stood in a fastidiously furnished bedroom upstairs, but was soon removed to a room on the ground floor. Was it the elevated position of this room—it was just above the high cellar dairy—that attracted the proud little Frau Postmeister to it, or its vicinity to her special realm, the kitchen, or her unconscious adherence to that old custom which made owners of a farm couch on top of their hoard, the dairy? Certain it is that there was nothing attractive about the room itself, for it was a low, barnlike place, hardly spacious enough to hold the huge green majolica stove and the enormous bed with the crib for the perennial baby, to say nothing of a big oak table and other sizable paraphernalia of the household. But Frau Marie, who always had her own decided taste, liked it immensely and made it the sanctuary of her family tabernacle.

So, for thirty years, this room remained the parental bedchamber, the Herr Postmeister retreating to one of the handsome guest rooms upstairs

pending the birth of a child. It also served as the family dining, sewing, and living room whenever the weather necessitated the use of stoves, which in this cold, damp climate was the case for almost three fourths of the entire year.

"Yes, the most important room in the house was the ugliest, too," says Auguste Alfeis with a reminiscent groan. But this did not trouble its East Frisian owners, whose art sense had never been awakened. In fact none of the rooms in the house was conspicuous for beauty, in spite of the magnificent old furnishings. For the splendid Brussels carpets, that even now have not quite outlived their usefulness, were protected in spots by cheap, gay rugs; exquisite inlaid tables were covered with white napkins or gaudy, fringed tablecloths; furniture upholstered in fine brocade was blotted here and there by fussy, bright tidies; the long mirrors between the windows were separated from their marble supports, and the latter, laden with gimcrackery of all sorts, were removed to corners; the few good books were banished to the attic or hidden in closets; worthless *genre* pictures or family daguerreotypes were hung next to fine old English engravings. So the house was decidedly inartistic in appearance, but it was pervaded by an atmosphere of *Gemütlichkeit*, of

peace and plenty, of kindliness and cheer, that more than made up for the absence of beauty.

Though there was a great deal of rubbing and scrubbing, it was never allowed to interfere with anybody's comfort, and there was no hustle and bustle, no scolding and bickering, connected with it. Frau Marie's reverence for her furniture affected the children's comfort only so far as to require them (his little princeship Claus always excepted) to sit on kitchen stools whenever the family and their summer guests dined in state in Uncle Wenckebach's fine old dining hall. Woe to the little greasy fingers that dared at such times to meddle with the splendid polish of the stately high-backed chairs. Frau Marie did not scold on such occasions,—in fact she hardly ever scolded,—but she had a large store of good-natured ridicule which the children feared far more than any angry words, and which, moreover, had the advantage of never disturbing the serenity and peace of the household. Frau Marie would have peace at all costs, for she herself had suffered enough from the absence of it in her own family,—a family of nine children ruled by a stepmother whose fine moral character could shed no warmth because the graces were lacking. When Frau Marie, at the age of twenty-five, had married

the man of her heart's desire, the object of her earliest girlish fancy, she had silently, in her happiness, promised herself to let her own children—there was no doubt in her young mind that she would have plenty of them—enjoy the freedom and peace she herself had so sorely missed.

And she thoroughly succeeded in making her home an earthly paradise for her little ones, whose joys were thousandfold. Every succeeding year opened a new heaven of bliss, in which the central sun, the Christmas tree, shone forth with mystic splendor, shedding its lights of anticipation and fulfillment all through the long, dark winter days. The festivals of Easter, of Whitsuntide, of Michaelmas, and not less that of the eighth of October, the birthday of both parents, were surrounded by a deep glow of joy. The fifty-two happy Sundays of each year were like so many shining stars, whose steady light was but dimmed at times by comets and meteors such as the *Schlachtfest*,* the visits from a beloved boy cousin, the village fairs, the births, burials, and weddings in the neighborhood.

Elderly Herr Wenckebach, who disliked farming and, aside from his favorite pursuit of weeding the

* A feast given by the owner of an estate, etc., on occasion of the slaughtering of pigs.

garden, had not taken any particular duties upon himself, was a jolly playmate for the children. He frequently romped about with his youngsters in spite of a large portion of dignity, the most conspicuous emblem of which was a starched shirt that, much to the astonishment of the villagers, he wore even on week days. On Sunday afternoons he often made the children shout with delight over his ingenious nonsense medleys and his perfect mimicry of old peasants, peddlers, and Jews. The latter especially, to whose craftiness the guileless man repeatedly fell a victim, and who were, therefore, not allowed on the premises by his energetic Frau, often were the subject of Sunday afternoon hilarity.

Frau Marie herself never had any time to play with her little ones; when they teased her for it, she would tell them with great seriousness that she had "a bone in her leg," a complaint which did not fail to inspire them with awe. But occasionally, —perhaps as often as twenty times during the year,— she gave them a treat of her own: a sweet pudding or a savory soup for dinner in addition to the accustomed one-course meal of meat and vegetables.

And there was one blessed season of the year

when the sturdy Hausfrau changed into a regular fairy godmother. This happened during the time when the green shutters of the big hall downstairs remained closed all day long; when the yellow mail-coach brought mysterious boxes and parcels, and took away Frau Marie for a whole day at a time; when Auguste and the father told fairy stories in the dark, and all sang songs charged with delicious promise; when the children wrote "wish-papers" for St. Nicholas, and with beating hearts put them on the window-sill outside, never forgetting to add some bread for the hungry Saint and some cabbage leaves or wisps of hay for his weary steed. This is the blessed season when all over Germany the voices of ancient joy and faith are gathered into one mighty chorus of jubilant love at the celebration around the mystic tree of light. It was at Christmas that Frau Marie became lavish, that she spent unheard-of sums for toys, cakes, fruit, and even for candy,—an article that was rarely found in the Burg except at Christmas time.

Auguste, the ingenious little nursery governess, was of course the constant playmate and companion of the children. She never tired of telling them stories, of singing to them, of devising for them interesting and instructive games, particularly for

Tösi, to whom she was especially devoted. Being of a deeply religious nature she also tried to instill into her little charge a love for her Creator; she opened her eyes to the beauties of His world, and she taught her the childish prayers that all her life remained dear to Tösi on account of their association with Auguste's melodious voice.

V

ONE thing, however, even Auguste could not give to little Tösi, and that was a liking for and a skill in needlework, that German test of true womanliness. Tösi seems to have been born with an utter contempt for it, and when, at five years of age, she was sent from home to stay for a while with her grandparents, and the grandmother conscientiously set about making "the young obstinate" learn to knit, the silent child grew paler and thinner each day and finally collapsed entirely, so that the frightened old lady had to take her home quickly to prevent serious illness.

The parents then gave up trying to pattern Tösi's character after that of the average German maid of her day; henceforth she was allowed to follow her own predilections, which were decidedly not those of a girl. Not only did she prefer boys' games and playthings,—she frequently "swapped" her own feminine Christmas presents for those of her elder brother,—but she also chose boys exclusively for her playmates; moreover, she persuaded her mother that it would be economy to let her dress like a boy.

Geerd, the gallant young son of the village baker,

and in vacations her clever cousin, Georg Regel, were her constant companions. These boys, though older than Tösi, took great delight in their young playmate, whose "manliness" and originality especially commanded their respect and admiration. In their reminiscences of her, they agree in praising her remarkable fearlessness and determination, and also her compassionate kindness towards her younger sisters.

The animals were her special pets. She always had a tame "little beast" to which she devoted herself,—a cat, a magpie, a starling, a stork,—and it was in connection with the animal world especially that she showed her wonderful power of observation. It was Tösi who made the stolid people about her see the beauty of a spider's web or of a honeycomb, and who interested them in the busy markets of ant-hills, as well as in the private and public life of the family of storks which returned every year to their huge nest on the barn.

Her early loyalty to her friends is a trait on which Geerd (who, by the way, is now a prosperous innkeeper) dwells with pride and pleasure. He tells how one warm summer afternoon when all the children were exhausted with playing, the Frau Postmeister sent word to them to come in and eat rasp-

berries with whipped cream. "With a shout of delight," Geerd says, "we stormed the Burg, I keeping modestly in the rear. Suddenly Claus Wenckebach turned round on me, and, hitting me on the chest, hissed: 'You beggar, you shall not eat in my house.' Sorely hurt and disappointed I walked off, when all at once Tösi came running breathlessly after me. Taking my hand, she dragged me in the direction of the treat, and with tears in her eyes assured me that Claus was 'a wicked, bad boy,—mamma says so, too.'"

Geerd repaid such kindliness with absolute devotion. He not only did everything that his little "general" wanted him to do, but he was untiring in devising surprises for her,—a bird's nest, full of eggs, to which he helped her climb (and which the children never touched); an eel freshly caught in the slime, which the youngsters smoked and then ate with great gusto; a dead chicken which they cut open with beating hearts to see what was inside; cigar stumps which all these young rogues collected and buried in the ground until time favored secret smoking revels.

Tösi, like the rest, was passionately fond of smoking. When but four years old, she had been found one day under the dining-room table deadly pale

and sick from her first attempt at finishing a cigar stump that her father had left on the sideboard. This painful experience had the strange effect of making the little imp willing ever afterwards to attack even the biggest cigar.

Zest and perseverance also characterized the way in which the child played marbles (her favorite pastime for years) with the boys. It was generally not a harmless game for "keeps," but a very grown-up one for "stakes," and in playing it the young Frisian satisfied, and perhaps checked, any old Teuton gambling instinct that might have lurked within her.

Another art of masculine stamp to which Tösi was devoted from her early years was that of whistling,—an accomplishment to which she took as naturally as the bird does to chirping. Several ear-witnesses claim to remember how her sweet, delicate strains, proceeding generally from some branch of the huge linden tree in front of the manor house, would sometimes set all the nightingales in the groves and hedges near by singing lustily.

Her greatest gift, however, and the one which afforded the keenest delight to herself, was talking,—telling others in a logical, droll, graphic way about the many things she observed and thought.

Big words, the charmers of her cradlehood, had kept their fascination for her. She collected them as others do butterflies or stamps, using them in novel combinations whenever she talked before the children.

Among the grown-ups, the men especially delighted in the vigorous and gifted child. The laborers in the field, the menservants in the house, and the artisans in the village, all were her friends. In summer she went harvesting with them, partaking of their coarse food, and drinking out of the flask that was common property among them; in winter, during the care-free twilight hours, she smoked with them out of a little pipe that they had carved for her, and that had a place of its own on the big pipe-rack in the servants' kitchen. They taught her to drive and to ride on horseback, to crack the whip like a true coachman, and to shoot like a rifleman. In return she at times dropped the low German in which she conversed with them to perfection, and told them stories in High German, the language elevated in their minds by its exclusive use in school and church and among gentlefolk.

Two years ago the aged master blacksmith of the village told me with great pride and feeling how little Tösi used to come to his forge in order to

repair her gun or to help him make nails, swinging the hammer like a born smith; how at vespers, when the work had stopped and she had spooned her share out of the common family pot, she would sit on the anvil, and with great earnestness and simplicity harangue the gravely attentive men about her. She told them stories from the Arabian Nights, from the Leather Stocking tales, from Greek mythology. She also explained thunderstorms and other phenomena of nature to them, dwelling with special fondness on the world of stars. Tösi was fascinated by the stars, as she was, in fact, by all bright and sparkling things. And she was not satisfied merely to look at these, but she must deck herself with them. So she often appeared adorned with penny watches and rings, with necklaces made of curtain chains, with bracelets and belts that were constructed out of the trappings of horses and carriages. This extraordinary fondness of hers for all things shining and glittering an astrologer might explain by the fact that the sun was prominent in her sign at the hour of her birth. Certain it is, that she was a true "child of the sun" in other ways than this.

VI

NOT even to this child of the sun, however, growing up in a happy home, could life continue to yield naught but sunshine and delight, nor could the "sun-spots" in her character always remain undiscovered. The chains of custom and tradition and the weights of the ordinary and conventional, that have ever pressed hard on spirits of individual stamp, bore heavily on even the young maiden.

The first bitter taste of the realities of social existence Tösi experienced at the time when her brother Claus was sent to the Gymnasium at Hildesheim, and Auguste, after years of devoted service to the Wenckebach family, left Upgant to prepare herself for her chosen work of nursing. Tösi was then seven years old. Up to this time she had been allowed to develop in almost absolute freedom from restraint, being obliged to observe only the few strict rules of the Wenckebach household, such as,—be punctual at meals; treat the servants with respect; do not quarrel with anybody; do not play the telltale; do not ask your elders for things which they have refused once for all,—laws which a child of a healthy appetite, of democratic and peace-loving

instincts, of an inborn respect for authority, could follow as easily almost as the laws of his own nature. Not even at the village school, which she had attended from her fifth year on, and where she had quickly mastered the elements of "religion," of reading, writing, and arithmetic, had she ever been made to feel any restraint, for the old schoolmaster, who freely vented his choleric temper on the backs of the village urchins, never touched the eager child, or even so much as reprimanded her.

The trouble began when Frau Marie, after repeatedly discovering dire results from Tösi's close contact with the little thatched heads, her schoolmates, decided that the "boy" in her little daughter had had his full share of development, and that the time had come when the "girl," too, must be given a chance to grow. So Tösi was separated from her boy comrades and sent to a private school, recently established in Marienhafe, for the young daughters of the dignitaries of the village, such as the Herr Postmeister, the pastor, doctor, veterinary surgeon, and apothecary. By way of prelude, Frau Marie locked away Tösi's checkered Russian blouse and the much-worn bloomers, and told the child that she was, after all, a girl, and must now try to behave as other little girls did. Cató's silent grief at

Portrait of 1866

Cato Wendschuh

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this parental compulsion, which irremediably closed the gates of her boys' paradise to her and thrust her into the gray limbo of girlhood, must have been poignant indeed, for even in mature years she remembered this experience as the one cruel blight on the happiness of her childhood.

Things might have gone a little better if "Tante" R., sole proprietor and faculty of the new institution for the development of feminine Frisian intellect, had possessed any quality that could have inspired or even interested her pupil. Tante, or "Tan," to be sure, was quite a versatile old dame. She could not merely teach the "elements" and the catechism, fancywork and French, but she was also able, while teaching, to cook her dinner and attend to her small-wares store at every bell-pull.

Cató, who had developed no liking for fancywork, and hated to learn the French poems of which she did not understand one word, considered didactic and dull Tan a greater bore even than crude old schoolmaster Jansen. She began to invent excuses for staying away from school, or, while there, to brew mischief, so that the old lady soon became afraid of her. As a result, she not only refrained from putting her sharp elbows into Cató's sides, as she was wont to do with the other lambs,

but also excused her from class whenever Georg Regel or Geerd Evers was cooing outside to tempt her to roam through the fields.

After a prolonged illness Tan had to give up teaching school, and so it came about that the name of Wenckebach one day figured in the *Hannover Daily* under an advertisement like this: "Wanted, for four girls aged nine, seven, five, three respectively, a competent governess. Salary: $75 a year and home." "Competent" governesses were scarce at that time, because Providence, in the shape of a paternal government, had not as yet found it expedient to provide schools for the training of women teachers. But governesses so-called there were in plenty, and not less than fifty-three applied for this lucrative position, some even offering their services gratis. The Herr Postmeister, overwhelmed by so much mail, read a few of the letters only, and then, to save further trouble, engaged the first applicant, hoping that he might thus draw a lucky card. But luck did not favor him in this lottery, and never did, as may be seen from the fact that during the seven subsequent years he had to repeat the experiment eight times, the governesses thus procured being but "annuals" at best.

The children seem at all times to have been re-

spectful and obedient, though not over-zealous at their lessons, which, however, they studied dutifully in spite of the mechanical, lifeless methods of their instructors. Tösi alone objected to being bored, and was in consequence lazy, inattentive, and at times even aggressively annoying. She acquired an astonishing skill in the dubious art of reading her lessons from the text-book that lay open before her teacher across the table. She ruined the fine old Dutch clock in the schoolroom by putting its hands forward and backward before and after lessons to suit her pleasure. She hid herself and the children under the drawbridge over the dried-up moat to escape the ordeal of taking a walk—"a senseless walk, *denk nur mal*"—with the unlucky governess. When kept behind locked doors after lessons she climbed out of the window, vanishing over the roof of the greenhouse or down a ladder that some chivalrous soul among the servants held for her.

The other children eagerly watched these escapades from their secure hiding-place under the bridge, and never breathed a word of what they saw to a soul outside their "gang." The spirit of this gang condemned telltales so absolutely and mercilessly that even the "Miss Nancy" among them was frightened into holding his tattling tongue.

But in any case they would not have told on Tösi, their special hero,—Tösi who could jump ditches as if they were nothing; who smoked up a big cigar without wincing; who, after falling into the canal in cold weather, unflinchingly let her wet clothes dry on her body; who boldly climbed high walls and trees after some forbidden fruit, and, perched high above her less daring accomplices, could eat up her spoil in perfect composure before she came down to them again. That she occasionally cheated the "innocents," as she called them, by cunningly making them swap things of theirs which she wanted, for a worthless trifle in her own possession, did not decrease their admiration, but merely added a bit of awe to it. Only governess Number One, poor soul, raised her voice in condemnation of the "moral depravity" of this tomboy. Before she left she implored the guileless children to beware of their eldest sister who, she was sure, would some day come to a bad end.

VII

THINGS went better after dull and fault-finding Number One had left in sorrow and indignation, and patient though ineffective Number Two had succeeded her. The spirit of defiance and mischief, having nothing special to nourish it, soon shriveled up. Interest and zest for work, however, did not rise in its stead. The gentle little ones, to be sure, obediently learned the lessons doled out to them. When things grew too intricate—when, for instance, they had to memorize from Luther's catechism how they should "drown in them the old Adam" (who, they knew for sure, had been "good and dead" ever so long)—they took refuge in the garret. Here, with knitted brows and clinched fists, waiting for inspiration, they would take turns in sitting on the huge family Bible which decorated the floor among a motley surrounding of old china, preserve jars, and old books.

Tösi, meanwhile, followed her own sweet will in regard to lessons. Most often she shirked them entirely. In summer the attractions outside the schoolroom were innumerable; in winter the skating on the canals, a favorite sport for old and young in Frisia, lured her away. Like her father, who, I am

told, took his last long skating trip when he was seventy-three, she could spend whole days on the ice, fascinated by the sport itself, and by the change it wrought in the men, women, and children around her. The East Frisian seems to thaw out when everything about him is frozen stiff, and the moment he gets his skates on, he breaks the heavy crust of his everyday manner to change once more into a merry and reckless old Beowulfer. Tösi never missed an opportunity to be a link in the formidable living chain that on days of special sport swept down the canal like a bristling sea serpent, and after hours of vigorous skating dismembered at some wayside inn. She keenly enjoyed the bracing exercise and the yells of delight that accompanied it, and with intent relish she did her generous share of the ensuing consumption of savory *Schinkenbutterbrot* (raw ham sandwiches) and delicious *Warmbier* (hot ale sweetened with syrup).

That Tösi, in spite of her dislike for the schoolroom and her utter indifference to lessons, was far ahead of other children of her age in point of thought and expression may be gathered from a variety of childish documents which a strongly developed family pride fortunately has preserved, together with the toys that inspired them. Tösi's fa-

vorite plaything, after the period of guns and drums, of fortresses and locomotives, had passed was a simple little Noah's ark stored with the plainest kind of wooden animals. These she not only individualized very cleverly, but also furnished with a written and sealed constitution. The latter, drawn up when she was ten years old, is monarchical in its form, but thoroughly democratic in spirit. The lion is the ruler, of course. He figures as "His most serene Majesty Milord Pantalon Welf, Monarch and King over the Uplands, over Africa and America." Among the subjects, there is a Lord Pig, Gentleman; a Prince Panther, First Councilor; a Rector Lynx and a Professor Fox; a Teacher Dog and a Pastor Magpie. Prominent among the "laws" are such as,—you shall not quarrel; you shall teach the little ones; you shall not be wasteful or miserly; you shall help the suffering; you shall not abuse the prisoners even in times of war; you shall not despise the lowly. The hardest punishments are to be inflicted on those who break their oaths, for "they shall be executed and then jeered at;" on those who mock the lowly, for "they shall be imprisoned for sixteen years;" on those who are miserly, for "they shall be flogged and then thrown into prison."

For a long time these animals were Tösi's favorite

company, especially on rainy days or on long winter evenings. While the "innocents" amused themselves with their needlework or their dolls, Tösi sat in some corner, talking to the "beasts" with great seriousness and in an uninterrupted flow of words. She herself called this favorite occupation her *Patern*, by which she probably meant a discoursing and exhorting after the manner of a *Pater*, *i. e.*, a pastor. The themes of these discourses, which "His Majesty the Lion" generally addressed to his dumb subjects, seem to have been historical, political, and ethical in content.

Such orations must have been very interesting to a youthful audience,—the parents evidently never took the trouble to listen,—for it was a gala day for the sisters as well as the village children whenever Tösi, at rare intervals, announced her willingness to *patern* in public, and to hold what she called a *Postamentpredigt* (literally, a sermon from a pedestal). Eagerly the little tots, who knew the wishes of their commander-in-chief, then made the necessary preparations. A huge wooden footstool was quickly placed in the warm end of the large room, a big feather duster was fastened behind it in the manner of a baldachin, and in front chairs were arranged for the audience. Not until

the children were quietly seated did Tösi walk in, ark under arm, and kneel down on the cushion at the foot of the feather baldachin. After placing the representative animals on the footstool in front of her, she took one among them, usually the lion, who was supposed by her touch to change into an articulate being. Then, with the air of a professor, she delivered her oration.

By degrees all the sisters caught a predilection for this kind of game. On winter evenings when the whole family sat around the large oaken table, the father comfortably leaning back in his sofa corner smoking a long pipe and reading the *Berlin Daily*, the mother sitting erect by his side, her hands busy with knitting, her eyes glancing over some illustrated magazine before her, there would gradually arise a buzzing, bubbling noise of four or five voices, and a shoving and shuffling from as many pairs of hands. "I do not understand how our parents were ever able to concentrate their minds on their reading," Tösi, grown up, would say, with an expression of wonder and amusement, forgetting that the marvelous power of concentration which she herself showed in later life was probably fostered by conditions like these.

When Tösi was twelve years old something hap-

pened that put a sudden and final stop to all *Paterei* and made her banish Noah's ark to the sphere of the family Bible. This epoch-making event was a performance, by good actors, of Schiller's *Die Räuber* in the ramshackle theater at Emden. Tösi witnessed it in company with Claus and Georg, who had previously tasted of the intoxicating draught of the theater. But this performance must have been a unique experience for them, too, inasmuch as it kindled their enthusiasm and imagination to such a pitch that, on coming home, they immediately set to work to write a drama after the pattern of Schiller's volcanic production. This rather bloody piece was then acted before a breathless audience of children and householders, the chorus of "innocents" being used for the purpose of some extra slaughtering.

When cousin Georg went home this time, he did not, as he had done before, leave Tösi some such thing as an ingeniously devised trap for catching birds, or some home-made apparatus for mixing chemicals, but he made her a complete puppet theater, and this, from now on, took the place of the ark.

Meanwhile, Auguste Alfeis, being near enough for occasional visits and watching the progress that

Tösi's mind was making, had tried to persuade the parents that it was their duty to send this clever child of theirs to a good school. It was not easy to make Frau Marie see the necessity for such an "emancipated" step, for she herself had hardly learned to spell correctly before she left school, and yet felt herself to be quite a useful member of society. But she finally yielded to her progressive husband.

So it happened that, much to the distress of everybody except the governess, then Number Four, Tösi was sent to school in Hildesheim, where her brother and cousin also were studying.

PART II
THE SCHOOLGIRL

Oh, the dear, peaceful schoolrooms, the spiritual home of golden years of youth!

C. W.

VIII

IN selecting Hildesheim as the proper place for their daughter's "higher education," Tösi's parents had been influenced by sentiment and convenience alike. This little city was the one spot outside East Frisia to which they were attached both by cherished memories of the past and by much prized connections with the present. The mother of cousin Georg, a younger sister of the Herr Postmeister, lived here, and being the wife of a poorly paid, though distinguished schoolmaster, was doubly glad to care for her brother's children along with her own lively brood. Her husband, a Thuringian, the Rector of the Hildesheim Gymnasium for boys, had frequently been a guest in Upgant, and, by his sound learning and his genial good humor, had won the silent respect and affection of his undemonstrative Frisian relatives. His enthusiastic, impulsive manner and his lover-like adoration of his beautiful if impassive housewife were accepted good-naturedly as unavoidable and rather amusing eccentricities of the South German temperament. It was indeed a piece of great good fortune that Tösi could be a member of this simple, frugal household, whose commanding center was a man so in-

tellectual, sympathetic, and music-loving as Uncle Regel. Of far greater importance for her development, however, was the fact that this household happened to be in ancient Hildesheim, where all conditions combined to create an ideal atmosphere for the education of children. So captivated was Tösi by the beauty of this unknown world in which she found herself, and by the engrossing interest of her new life, that she forgot to be at all homesick. Her home letters, however, give but little idea of the enthusiasm and joy of living which, according to the reports of school friends, animated her whole being from the beginning to the end of her four years' stay in Hildesheim.

The lovely surroundings of the city of Bernward aroused Tösi's keenest delight even before the historic charm of her new environments had mastered her. This child of the plains never cared much for the unbroken horizon lines of her Northern home, but always longed for the dramatic contours of mountain and valley. The "mountains" around Hildesheim—the first she had ever consciously beheld—were modest enough; but no Alpine climber reaching the top of the Jungfrau could have felt more elated and expanded than did the puffing Northern girl, when for the first time she looked

down on her birthplace and as far away as Hannover from the top of the Galgenberg, a hill to the north of the city, that rises to the actual height of four hundred and sixty feet.

Uncle Regel was a devoted lover of nature, and every Sunday, like true Germans, he and his family shouldered their knapsacks and migrated to the wooded hills near the city,—to the Wohldenberg with its mediæval castle ruins and its gaunt fortress tower, from which aged King Brocken could be seen among his vassals, the Harzmountains; to the romantic Bodensteinklippen and the venerable chapel that, a thousand years ago, monks had hewn out of the hard rocks; to the Moritzberg, from which a Frisian, Benno, was said to have ruled old Bennopolis and its stanch Saxon inhabitants before the time of Charlemagne and his bishops.

Tösi's boon companion outside of school hours was her old playmate, Georg Regel. He was eager to take her to see the show places of Hildesheim, and he never tired of telling her of the great men and events that had shaped the glorious history of this "Nuremberg of the North." In her East Frisian home there had been few conspicuous links with the past,—an old *Wasserburg* in the neighborhood, the ruin of an ancient church tower

changed by pirates into a safe robbers' retreat, and some old family chronicles and bits of antique furniture in possession of the Wenckebachs. But in sober East Frisia no golden legend had been spun about these relics, and no human interest was attached to them. And so they had quite failed to stir Tösi's imagination or to awaken her naturally strong historic sense. Here in Hildesheim, on the contrary, stick and stone were aglow with legendary lore revealing the shapes of Odin and the Virgin Mary, of great kings and saints, of giants, dwarfs, and devils,—all actors in the drama of Hildesia's destiny. "The venerable rosebush in the cloistered court of the cathedral told of Louis the Pious and the founding of the bishopric of Hildesheim during the ninth century. The cathedral itself, with its bronze works of art, proclaimed the genius of the artist bishop, Bernward (993–1022), under whose fostering care the city had become one of the most significant seats of German Romanesque art." The ramparts, changed into shaded walks; the moats, metamorphosed into parks; the ivy-grown fragments of the old fortress wall,—all bore constant witness to the times when Holy Church took up the sword against her enemy, the State.

With the full enthusiasm of her nature Tösi en-

tered into the atmosphere of history and tradition about her. Every day on her way to school she walked across the market place, with its splendid town hall, its Roland statue, and its swarming life of buyers and sellers of old Saxon descent, and by such jewels of fourteenth and sixteenth century architecture as the Templar House and the *Knochenhaueramtshaus.** The latter, the finest timber building in Germany, together with hundreds of gabled structures of like character which the pride of the citizens keeps in perfect trim, give Hildesheim its peculiar air of quaint and healthy old age. Although the gay picturesqueness of the streets, the fine carving on the buildings, the merry companionship of line and color, made but a vague stage impression on Tösi, a girl with little or no appreciation for the purely artistic, the façades, decorated with rich carvings of sixteenth century life, of Greek and Christian mythology, excited her interest and curiosity from the first. The house mottoes especially, pithy bits of sixteenth century humor and common sense, struck a sympathetic chord in the young Frisian. "A house without a motto," said the Hildesheim burghers of old, "is like an egg without salt," and then proceeded to

* An ancient guild house of the butchers.

flavor their habitations with spicy inscriptions, such as:

"Surly fellow, go your way."

"Ego vero haud mordeor" (*I have a thick skin*).

"Let him who builds his house upon a public way
Care not a whiff for what the world may say."

When Tösi had been in Hildesheim a year something happened which gave the city a new luster for historians and lovers of art, and incidentally did much to make history *anschaulich* (vivid) to imaginative children such as Cató Wenckebach. As she was on her way to school one morning, she saw a small company of soldiers trundling three heavy wheelbarrows across the narrow streets to the barracks. Eagerly joining the troop of curious children that followed on behind, Tösi heard that a quantity of strangely shaped old iron had been unearthed accidentally at the foot of the Galgenberg. "The dingy, rusty metal had such a savor of antiquity about it," she used to say, "that we children imagined all manner of romantic stories connected with it, and plagued the men at the barracks with questions at all times of the day. Imagine our excitement when it was discovered that our 'old iron' was nothing less than the magnificent silver table service of a Roman general!

We felt that we had been instrumental in restoring the relics, and consequently enjoyed all the pride of ownership." Tösi, in later years, remembered this incident with such keen pleasure that she took every opportunity to see the richly decorated vessels (now in the Berlin Museum) "that give us such a vivid picture of the customs and habits of the aristocratic Romans of the first empire."

But History, which from now on was to be one of Tösi's favorites among the Muses, did not speak to her through the past only. The present, too, was charged with the rarest historic interest. It was the time when Bismarck, the colossus, stepped forth with his project of a new federation of German states under the leadership of Prussia; when interfering and intriguing Austria was thrown out of the confederacy, and her German allies—Hessia, Saxony, Hannover—were forced to surrender by the victorious armies of Prussia; when the blind king of Hannover, luckless George V, the last crowned head of the proud Guelphs, was dethroned, and his kingdom, including the provinces of East Frisia and Hildesheim, was annexed by the stalwart "upstart" among the German states.

For the East Frisians, as well as for most of the inhabitants of Hildesheim, these events, especially

those of the year 1866, were a source of satisfaction rather than regret. Neither of these provinces had prospered under the loose but reactionary rule of Hannover, as they had in times past under the watchful eye of the Prussian Eagle.

All this, however, did not prevent the young people of Hildesheim from letting their emotions surge high in favor of the "wronged" king. Tösi and her brother were among the hottest of the Guelphs. While aristocratic Claus naturally sided with the nobles, the privileged class under Hannoverian rule, Tösi, the democrat, felt that she was bound to the house of Hannover by all the ties of loyalty. The absurdities into which a short-lived hatred of Prussia provoked the youthful Hildesheimers—defiant paradings of Hannover colors, muffled shouts of "Kuckuck" aimed at Prussian officers —were a gleeful remembrance to Tösi in after years.

Thus Hildesheim, past and present, stimulated Tösi's fresh, open mind. In a short time, and without any trouble, the ignorant country girl had gathered a rich harvest of *Anschauung* and information such as no schoolroom could have yielded. And yet it was the schoolroom in Hildesheim, and the influences she met there, which not only shaped her career, but also did much to develop her character.

IX

"I LIKE going to school very much," Tösi wrote in her first letter home; "things are neither too easy nor too hard for me, and so the grade in which I am just suits me." Not a word did young reticence say about the many difficulties and chagrins that beset her during this initial stage of her school days in Hildesheim. The rusticity of Tösi's manners, ridiculed by her new companions, and, more humiliating still, the rank ignorance disclosed in her entrance examinations, must have been melancholy revelations to her. For at home the sovereignty of her mind had never been questioned, not even by boys older then herself, and her oddities had but added luster to her respected person. Being found most deficient in the "elements," such as arithmetic, geography, *Handarbeiten* (sewing, darning, knitting, etc.), she was put into a class with pupils who were considerably her juniors. And even here she often stumbled woefully where the youngsters about her could glide smoothly. When she recited her first French lesson, pronouncing the words as old Tan had taught her to do, she roused such a volley of laughter that even the masterful teacher,

the object of Tösi's ardent adoration, was carried away by it. Indeed there was a suppressed titter around her whenever she recited anything, until the broad Frisian dialect, which the distinct enunciation insisted upon in every German class-room made all the more marked, had lost its pristine freshness in contact with the conventional and correct German of Hannover. She also roused hilarity by the naïve way in which she would acquiesce with an eager, deeply guttural *Gut!* when lessons were assigned, and by the whole-heartedness with which she blew her nose,—often stopping the work of the class while she was thus energetically trumpeting. There was, moreover, something in the very appearance of the little square figure that caused merriment,—whether one looked at her hair, which was combed back uncompromisingly from a full round forehead and bristled under the threefold bondage of comb, net, and ribbon, or at her plump feet encased in boots and stockings such as might defy fire and water. Add to this a dress of gay Scotch plaid that showed the original combination of hoopskirt and Mother Hubbard waist; long earrings that dangled down absurdly from her strong ear lobes; a huge silver watch carried on a bright chain of enormous strength,—and it is easy to see

why young people snickered and older people smiled whenever they looked at her.

Catό was proof enough against ridicule, however, for she had what is a true gift of the gods and a rare accomplishment in this heavy world of ours, — the capacity to take herself as a good joke occasionally, and to laugh over her own blunders. By joining heartily in the mirth that her mistakes and eccentricities aroused, she not only stopped derision, but earned general approval and admiration.

The fight with her ignorance and her mental idiosyncrasies was a much harder task, for she found it exceedingly distasteful to apply herself to much detested studies such as arithmetic, English, and sewing. But her strong will, helped by a great enthusiasm for work that had suddenly entered her whole being, conquered every difficulty. Studying with all her might from morning till evening, she was soon promoted, and before long could join the class where, according to her age, she properly belonged. Here, without ever consciously striving for power, she forthwith fell into her natural position of leader, which she never forfeited during the rest of her school career.

There was nothing sentimental or morbid in the Catό cult that ensued. What bound all her school-

mates to her in unfaltering loyalty was a healthy, whole-hearted admiration of the large, honest mind and the vigorous, independent, unconventional personality of the Frisian girl. Every day after school a number of her devotees walked the two miles home with her in order to enjoy her company and carry her books, and some of them even attended upon her pleasure as early as half past seven in the morning, when she stepped out of the house to go to school. The high office of book-bearer, with the privilege of a walk at her side, was allotted every week so judiciously by Cató herself that feuds occurred but rarely among her vassals. The girls also sewed for her — covertly, of course — inside and outside the schoolroom, and in the end made it possible for her to finish the man's shirt, the woman's chemise, and the sampler required from her by the government before her graduation.

In return Cató helped the little housewives of the future out of their special difficulties. When the class was given a theme for composition and did not know how to tackle it, — as seems frequently to have been the case, — they went to Cató for help, since she was especially strong and eager in that line of work. She would then go with them to the top staircase of the old schoolhouse and, framed in

by the door of the attic, with her followers on the steps below, she would explain things. "So simple, logical, and graphic was her manner of presentation," says one of her schoolmates, "that every girl understood, and after Cató's talk was able to treat the subject in her own way."

From this one would expect to hear that Cató's own composition work was of a superior order. Curiously enough, to judge from the marks on her quarterly certificates, this does not seem to have been the case. According to these she was marked "superior" in gymnastics, music, nature studies, French, drawing, and in all the histories, Biblical, literary, universal; but she attained only a "very good" in composition, arithmetic, and geography, while in *Handarbeiten* she never rose above the passing level. What it was that, in spite of her rare gift of exposition and her unusually good handling of the spoken word, prevented her from attaining to the longed-for excellence in her written productions may be suspected from a glance at the letters she wrote home during her stay at Hildesheim. There are as many as twelve a year, but never more, and they are on the whole what Cató herself later on would have called "police reports,"—brief, unadorned enumerations of the im-

portant events in her life, which consisted of much work and little play. At rare intervals, at Christmas, for instance, or on her parents' birthday, when she expressed feeling, she did it in a way that probably illustrates the high style she used in composition. "Beloved parents," she wrote when she was about fourteen; "pray accept my most soul-felt congratulations for Your impending birthday. May our kind Heavenly Father give You much enduring health and joy, by which gracious gifts the happiness of Your children will be insured. While last year, when we celebrated this joyful day as of yore, I could be in Your midst, and could fold You in my warm embrace, and could personally tender my sincerest congratulations to You, this year, alas, I am but granted the pleasure of imagining myself amongst You, and of viewing the happy event from a sorrowful distance." After this flowery web of words we easily believe what she says in the same letter,—that for her the writing of a composition on Marie Antoinette's last hours, accomplished the week before, was mere child's play in comparison to the description just finished of a horse and a donkey, which she found "an extremely difficult subject to handle."

She was never afraid, however, of difficulties she

encountered on fields of work in which she liked to linger. "I have a number of hard tasks before me," she continues, "but I don't mind, for the more I live in my work, the more content and even happy I feel; and happiness, after all, is the most important thing in life" (August, 1869).

The young hedonist had been in Hildesheim scarcely a year when she decided that she would be a teacher,—a teacher not after the pattern of the governesses at home, but one like Fräulein Michelsen, her instructor in French and literature. This young woman of refinement and culture was the first in the succession of good fairies that were to touch Tösi's personality with their wand of womanly charm, mellowing what was raw and rough in her. It was Fräulein Michelsen, no doubt, who unwittingly stimulated her young admirer to this early choice of a profession, although Tösi, in deliberately and conscientiously deciding upon her future career, really followed but her own truest instincts. It is quite touching to see how Tösi, the tomboy of old, receives the news that her parents have granted her Christmas wish—the only one expressed that year—to be allowed to become a teacher. "How happy I am," she wrote, "that now I may carry out this earnest purpose of mine with

your consent! I shall try to show myself worthy of your goodness to me, and to give you and my dear teachers satisfaction by sedulously applying myself to my studies."

Among her Hildesheim friends, young and old, this decision of hers created no small surprise. That the daughter of a well-to-do landed proprietor, who was sure to find a husband some day, should choose to become an underpaid teacher or a mere governess at best—what eccentricity! But self-sustained Cató went her own way calmly and cheerfully, working with doubled zeal now that she had to carry out a serious purpose in life, and playing with a buoyant spirit whenever play came her way.

So, carried along on the steady flood of her enthusiasm for work, and basking in the sunshine of her own good will toward men as well as in the warmth of general friendliness about her, Cató enjoyed, as she herself said, the happiest life that ever fell to the lot of a schoolgirl.

X

A NATURE such as Tösi's was bound to find a "savor of festivity" in all life could yield. For hers were gifts such as raise us above the commonplaceness of everyday existence,—a temperamental imperviousness to unessentials, and a wholesome self-love dignified by an early developed steadiness of purpose. These, her natural weapons, made her invulnerable to the thousand and one cares on which the average German girl—self-effacing, tender, proper, as centuries of tradition have made her—dissipates her energies. Cató never wailed when she tore or soiled her clothes (a frequent occurrence), but she appealingly paraded the holes and spots until some kind soul took pity on them; or she covered them up, wearing Mother Hubbard aprons in summer and a charitable big woolen shawl in winter. Hoops that insisted on peeping through her skirt she pulled out mercilessly, reducing the puffed-up garment to a sorry bag. Cató's second foster mother, a thrifty Frau Postdirector, with whom she boarded after her uncle had been promoted to the directorship of the Hamlin Gymnasium, felt more aggressively responsible for the girl's appearance than good Aunt Regel had done. Her frequent

remonstrances with Tösi for not taking an umbrella to protect her "beautiful new hat" whenever a shower was threatening, were quietly met by the purchase of a sailor hat covered with black oilcloth. That hat, Tösi found, neither rain nor shine could injure, and henceforth it became a regular part of her ideal outfit. With what decision she treated her heavy braids, which she could never do up properly, and which therefore caused the people about her to indulge in corrective comments, may be seen from a passage in one of her home letters. "By the way, I wear my hair short now," she wrote; "got rid of braids, hairpins, and appendages six months ago; feel very free and light without them. My friends wail about the loss of my 'beautiful thick hair;' but what is the use of beauty, if it causes continual annoyance?"

Most of the people about her were far from resenting these oddities of the kind-hearted, jolly girl, whose harmonious wholeness of nature seems to have disarmed criticism, as all wholeness is apt to do in our modern world of incongruities and discords. Whenever meddlesome and nagging dispositions insisted on rubbing against her, she put out her "quills," as she used to call her ability to ward off interference by entire indifference and cool com-

posure. Her new landlord, for instance, one of those grum family tyrants the Fatherland grows so plentifully, soon learned to keep his hands off this prickly piece of Northern independence. Feeling called upon to superintend her private expenses, he had bickered with her as he did with his long-suffering kin. After listening politely to the vituperations of the choleric man, Tösi at once wrote to her parents, and without so much as mentioning the harangues that annoyed her, she suggested to her father the educational advantages of letting her be her own treasurer. The request was granted, and peace ensued.

Reports of unconventionalities, of appearances neglected, of calls unpaid, reached her parents through her brother Claus, who by this time had developed a most painful correctness in manner and taste, and who felt called upon to watch over the honor of the house of Wenckebach. One of his charges against his "hoidenish" sister produced the only letter of rebuke that the Herr Postmeister ever wrote to his eldest daughter. And this is the way in which the fifteen-year-old girl answered it:

"I CANNOT tell you how grieved I am to see myself censured by you on account of my lack of attention

to the G——s, which, you say, makes them suppose that my affection for them has decreased. I did not call on them simply because they live so far away and I have not been able to spare the time. Appearances, I grant, were against me; but why do people, bound together by close ties of friendship as we are, judge one another by appearances? If I wanted to, I could accuse them of indifference as well. That Claus wrote to you about this without first informing me of it is extremely annoying to me. I expect, yes, I can demand, that everybody who has anything against me will let me know of it personally instead of informing me through a third person. Please understand that I am not angry with Claus, for he may have meant well. I simply wish to justify myself. Your obedient daughter,

"Cató Wenckebach."

Long-suffering as she had to be, and was willing to be, in all matters concerning the young "lord," her elder brother, she yet held her own against his "lording it" as none of her sisters, or even her parents, ever did. A characteristic little episode, illustrative of the different nature of brother and sister, is told by a schoolmate of Tösi's. Claus, she recounts, who usually honored his sister with a call

on Sundays, came in on a week day to tell Tösi that her *full* name—*his* family name—was carved on a bench in the park. "Oh, where?" Tösi shouted, reaching eagerly for her hat. "Of course it is there no longer," Claus answered with much dignity. "Why, what's happened to it?" Tösi asked, disappointed. And when she heard that Claus had removed all traces of it as soon as he had seen it, she snapped an angry "Mind your own business next time" at the ruffled youth.

What romantic soul it was that had thus tried to perpetuate Cató's name, history does not record. It may have been the mysterious young man who afterwards proposed to her. Dame Gossip tells that he was a post-official and that they met at dancing lessons. But we are glad, in any case, to hear that studious Cató was woman enough to enjoy the attention offered—at a safe distance—by an infatuated youth, and furthermore that she keenly relished the rhythmic motion of dancing, in which she indulged vigorously whenever opportunity offered. Since her school was in session every week day from eight to twelve and from two to four, and home studies, inclusive of piano practice, occupied about five hours more of her time daily, pleasures like dancing parties, concerts, visits to the Hannover

Court Theater, could only be enjoyed during the small hours of the night or on Sundays. "Last Monday I helped celebrate the J——s' silver wedding," she wrote home in 1868. "At noon I consented to go to the ball that was given in honor of the occasion (was n't it fortunate, though, that my dress happened to be in trim?); then I went to school for two hours. After that I had a splendid time dancing until five next morning. At eight, after I had enjoyed a two hours' nap on the sofa, I went to school, where my teachers congratulated me on my taking pleasure in frivolities such as balls." Cató must have been a striking figure at these festive gatherings, for even at that time people who met her carried away a vivid remembrance of her personality. From a description that some friend gives of her appearance at one of these dancing parties it may be gathered that on these occasions Cató thoroughly indulged her primitive craving for wearing very bright and often clashing colors,—a craving that she did not outgrow until late in her life. This crude insensibility of hers to the laws of harmony in color and line was offset, however, by a growing appreciation of what was finest in the realm of sound. At home her natural instinct for music had been nourished on the best of food,—on Mozart,

whose melodies the Herr Postmeister had whistled and sung almost to the exclusion of all other composers, and on Beethoven, whom Claus and Georg had often played on their beloved violins. Mozart and Beethoven were indeed a wholesome antidote to the sweetish Verdi-Donizetti-Meyerbeer poison that at that time threatened to corrode Germany's musical taste. Concluding that her Verdi-smitten piano teacher gave her "trash" to play, and that his method was not so exact as it might be, Cató independently changed instructors, and reported the *fait accompli* to her parents with an assured "Taking your permission for granted, I have given up Herr X, whose musical taste and method were inferior. Under Herr Z's excellent guidance I at last [!] begin to see that music is a great art. Oh, if my sisters only could have such instruction and could be made to practice regularly! —for there is no comfort in life without music."

Her own great musical ambition at this time was to be able to sing. She took lessons, but soon found, though the teacher disagreed with her, that she had no singing voice. So she took to whistling again. To indulge her fondness for this she sometimes went into the old Jewish cemetery that she had to pass on her way to school. Here she found

a grateful auditor in the old day laborer who liked to chat with her. The wrinkled fellow's wrath at the "tough old Israelites," whose gravestones, hidden under the grass, blunted his scythe, remained a mirthful remembrance to her.

A considerable number of plain men—shopkeepers and mechanics—befriended the Frisian girl, allowing her to pry about their shops and watch them at their work. The philosophical shoemaker, hammering away at her heavy boots, discussed heaven and earth with her; the watchmaker let her try her hand at repairing her old timepiece, and showed his liking for his sharp apprentice by presenting her with a steel chain of her own choosing,—"one you can hang on without breaking it," as Tösi admiringly described it.

The catholicity of her disposition which, in a world of sharply marked social distinctions, enabled her to enjoy simple human relations like these must, in a measure, have caused her indifference to such lines of separation as the three religious sects (Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish) had established among the population of Hildesheim. To be sure, she was of too decidedly Germanic breed to think of associating intimately with the families of her schoolmates of Israelitish blood, but

she had a warm friendship for one or two Jewish school-comrades,—an eccentricity which amazed her relatives, especially those in East Frisia, whose racial and social disdain of the dark-haired "Jödskes" was very pronounced indeed. Nor did she share the contempt of her Protestant friends for the priest-ridden Catholics. The Catholic Church in Hildesheim, surrounded by all the concrete fascinations of its ancient history, though humiliated at the time by the Prussian policy of subjection, made a vivid impression on her. She frequented it for the sake of its music and gorgeous display, but—unlike her brother in this as in everything else—she never for a moment yielded to its thought-lulling charms. On the other hand, the church that claimed her by birth and baptism was least attractive to her. She was confirmed in the Lutheran Church (Easter, 1869), like all children of law-abiding German parents, and now could claim the threefold label of "baptized," "vaccinated," "confirmed," that the Fatherland put on its genuine stock. How far in Cató's case, as in many others, the catechisings, devotional exercises, and Bible classes that the established Church of Germany exacts from its *Konfirmanden* during the six months preceding their first Communion

failed of their real purpose may be seen from the one remark she makes on the subject in a letter to her parents: "The everlasting church-going and praying is over, *Gott sei Dank*, and now I never need bother about these things any more." The Lutheran Church, that, according to her own impatient expression, keeps forever "gnawing at the bones of grace" and that for more than a century has been "but a clog to the feet of spiritual progress," interested her even less than did the rest of those institutions which claim to have a monopoly on orthodox faith for the dealing out of religious truth.

Her indifference to the church of her fathers, for a time at least, changed into an outspoken antagonism when it appeared that it was the Lutheran clergy that successfully opposed all schemes for a more liberal education of girls. The man who fought most earnestly against this blank wall of prejudice at Hildesheim was Dr. Holscher, the Director of the Girls' High School, a man clear-sighted, progressive, and of the broadest intellectual sympathies. This personality of rarest fiber did more toward shaping Cató's future ideals and work than perhaps that of any other one of her teachers. The same unfavorable conditions which hampered

his work had so intimate an influence on Catō, not only in Hildesheim, but later in Hannover, that they demand elaboration here.

XI

"SO much is done now for the improvement of schools in general, why is it that the girls' schools are always left out of consideration!" This complaint young Goethe in 1765 wrote to his sister, one of the early victims of the insufficiency of scope in education and fields of activity open to women in modern Germany. A hundred years had passed, and the conditions criticised by the worshiping lover of woman still prevailed in the "land of schools." Theory, to be sure, that ever radiant and alluring ruler of German minds, had convincingly pleaded for the common humanity of man and woman, and poetic vision had given shape to such ideal conceptions of intellectual womanhood as Iphigenie, Eleonore, Natalie. But theory and poetry had been powerless to move and mold the heavy and unwieldy mass of actuality. It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century—a time when political life in Germany had once more fallen into the slough of stagnation—that practical schemes at last began to take their place by the side of heaven-soaring theories and poetic impersonations; that the active interest of experienced schoolmen turned to the long-neglected field of girls' educa-

tion; that women themselves began their organized efforts for the improvement of woman's industrial, social, and intellectual condition; and that strong personalities like Luise Otto Peters, Auguste Schmidt, and Helene Lange stirred public sentiment and showed by their own example what a great and good thing a highly educated woman is.

The plans for the improvement of woman's education which were brought before the public were of the most varied and even contradictory description. Conservatists held that the traditional æsthetic education should be continued, and that girls should be taught, as before, by men; others pleaded for women teachers, and advocated a thorough training in economics and domestic science for the future housewife; the more advanced maintained that woman, who after the development of machinery could no longer be an essential factor in the industrial life of the nation, should above all be educated with a view to the development of her own peculiar faculties; lastly the radicals, and among them the socialists, entirely reduced the question of ideals to one of bread and butter, and demanded like education for boys and girls.

Meanwhile an over-cautious paternal government complacently went on at its snail's pace of progres-

sion, and through its official mouthpieces from time to time gave utterance of what *it* thought about the matter. "A system of public schools for girls," wrote one of the councilors of education in 1865, "corresponding to that established for the boys is a contradiction in terms,—something so unnatural that it will never be realized."

So, in spite of all discussions, tracts, and petitions, the girls' schools remained officially what they had been for centuries,—conservatories for the cultivation of such decorative or useful products as man, searching the marriage markets, might be desirous of procuring for his parlor, his kitchen, or his nursery. But although the state, the controller of all schools, public and private, in Germany, had not been roused, the interest of the municipalities awakened to such a degree that a rapid increase in the number of girls' high schools was the immediate result. In some of the larger cities training schools for women teachers also were established, and thus girls' education gained much in extension. The curriculum, to be sure, was the same old bill of fare of almost a hundred years past,—religion, German (literature and rhetoric), history, French, English, geography, arithmetic, nature studies, singing, drawing, sewing, and gymnastics. Neither ad-

vanced mathematics nor classics had a place in this programme, nor did the amount taught in the approved subjects begin to compare with that required to feed the brains of German boys. The text-books, too, of which few are used in any German school, not only were extremely scant in number, but were also concocted with special concessions to delicate female intellects. So in 1865 there were (as in fact there still are) such monstrosities in German girls' schools as a *History of the World for Girls*, a *Literature for Girls*, yes, even an *Arithmetic for Girls*.

If one merely inquired into the *what*, not into the *how* of matters, one would conclude from the preceding that the education of German girls some fifty years ago was rather a superficial affair. We must not forget, however, that German school curricula, true to the blessed old German way of emphasizing the *Sein* more than the *Schein* ("quality" more than "quantity"), promise less than they actually give. In other words, the education that German girls got, and still get, in their poorly equipped schools, is pretty much on a level with, if not superior to, that given by the girls' high schools in countries where the curriculum shows the most dazzling array of advanced subjects. An English-

man, studying the actual condition of girls' education in Germany during the seventies, could without any undue amount of Tacitean idealizing say that all German schools for "females," low and high, were excellent, the instruction in them being so systematic and thorough that a servant maid in Germany was "better grounded than most young ladies in England."* Systematic instruction,—yes, that is one secret of the general success of German school-training; and also, as the appreciative Englishman might have added, the personality of the teacher,—two qualifying items that make all the difference in the world. The men who taught the girls, though generally not the most shining lights in their profession, were nevertheless men thoroughly trained for their work, and, like all German teachers, filled with the dignity of their office. What John T. Prince of Massachusetts says, in his *Methods of Instruction and Organization in the German Schools*, about the German teacher of to-day was true also fifty years ago. Having described the strong influence of the German teacher in "outside affairs," "a transmission of powers won by the courage, zeal, and intellectual strength of the teachers of three centuries," he continues: "In the

* S. Baring Gould, M. A., London, 1879: *Germany, Present and Past*, vol. i. p. 228.

schoolroom his personality is even more marked. Here we learn the secret of his power, which is that he is earnest in carrying out a purpose, . . . behind which there are both intelligence and professional training."* The German schoolmaster, as soon as he had awaked to the necessity of the new demand, could not but overstep the limits that tradition, custom, law, had fixed for his field of work. So it happened that a good part of advanced mathematics, for instance, which even now is excluded from the official curriculum of the girls' high schools, was smuggled in under cover of arithmetic, and that Latin here and there came in with French.†

The same government that rigorously insists on the suppression of all individuality in its soldiery leaves its army of school-teachers practically un-

* "The pupil teacher, pitiable product of the English school-starving system, is unknown in Germany. Teaching of even an elementary character is deferred until the theoretical part of training is over,—the eight or ten years' continuous study, first in a higher school, be it observed, and then in a training college. The result is that qualified teachers enter upon the serious work of life and become independent far later than with us, but popular education gains incalculably by the longer and severer discipline through which they are required to pass." Dawson, *German Life in Town and Country*, Putnam's Sons, N. Y., 1901.

† The author herself was taught French on the basis of Latin grammar by the principal of the Hannover Teachers' Training College. She remembers with amusement how much impotent displeasure the controlling state official evinced when at the oral examinations the progressive principal's transgressions were disclosed.

limited in this respect. "In spite," Mr. Prince observes, "of the minuteness of the superintendent's inquiry into the work of teachers, there seems to be little or no interference with the individuality of teachers." A principal, therefore, of high ideals and advanced ideas on the question of woman's education, such as the times were beginning to produce, could in a quiet way do much toward raising the standard and scope of instruction in his school. Dr. Holscher, of the Hildesheim High School for Girls, was such a man. Unlike many of the university-bred men who taught at the girls' schools, he had not been driven to this work either by his own mediocrity or by necessity, but had chosen it because to him the field of a higher education for girls seemed an uncultivated land of great promise. Unluckily for himself as well as for his cause, he came to his post in Hildesheim before the equitable Prussian school supervision had been fully established in the kingdom's new province of Hannover. A dull city school board, consisting largely of orthodox clergymen, clogged his feet at every forward step. One of his most urgent pleas had been for the building up of a normal-school course which should enable students such as Cató Wenckebach to pass the examination exacted by the

Prussian government from all teachers, private and public. Hoping against hope that his timely request would sooner or later be granted, he had meanwhile given several of his best students, Cató among them, gratuitous instruction in some of the courses required for the examination. After repeated rebuffs the spirited man at last gave up the fight and resigned his Hildesheim position. In her letters Cató laments the sad event. "Dr. Holscher leaves, and so my days in Hildesheim are numbered, too," she tells her parents. Referring to the "new Prussian law" requiring teachers' certificates, she says: "Even if such a law did not exist, my own heart would dictate the necessity of further study before I enter on my life work. For my education is in no way complete, and woman, as well as man, should strive for perfection in all things, and above all should try to reach a definite goal in her chosen work. You have granted my wish to become a teacher. Enable me now to get the most thorough training possible for my profession by allowing me to continue my studies at the newly founded Teachers' Training College (*Lehrerinnenseminar*) in Hannover. I most warmly appreciate the sacrifice involved in your giving me these two additional years of school. Let my education be my patrimony.

Of this nobody can rob me. Happy the woman who, by being enabled to provide for herself, is made conscious of her own usefulness in the world." Whether or not her parents recognized Cato's personal application of Goethe's superior wisdom here, they were much impressed by this mature letter, and cordially provided the means for her further study in the Teachers' College of Hannover. A short oral examination, and an elaborate composition on Iphigenie's plea that "a useless life is but an early death," lifted the eager girl to the second rung of her ladder of progress.

XII

WITH a heavy heart and with the unpractical circumstantiality so characteristic of the delightful pedant she could be at times, Cató made preparations to leave her beloved Hildesheim. "I have packed my books," she wrote in April, 1870; "the rest of my things will be attended to to-morrow. I have also taken leave of my dear school and now can calmly await my departure, which I have set for a week from to-morrow." The pain that threatened to disturb her prized equanimity at the idea of parting from her "paradise," as she called Hildesheim, she averted by philosophizing on the advantages of change in general and the beauties of her vocation in particular.

Accompanied by her feather beds and boxes, her bureau and piano, she appeared at her new home. Her two "mother hens," prim but cultured old maids, conscientiously kept the contract they had made with Cató; that is to say, they gave her a study and a bedroom for her own use, coffee and rolls for breakfast, a good two-course meal at noon, and tea plus *Butterbrot* for supper. The maid, as Cató had stipulated, brushed her skirts, polished her boots, and scrubbed and dusted her rooms.

"The expense for these modest luxuries is heavy" ($150 per year), Cató ruefully reported to the home folk, "but I cannot get anything decent below that, since Hannover is a much more expensive place than Hildesheim. And I am really very comfortable here,—live near the school, have a little *Sitzplatz* in the garden, have no Hausherr to grumble away the sunshine, and last, not least, am tended by ladies who are not only 'good Christians,' but excellent cooks as well."

Living intensely in the present as was her wont, Cató soon stopped longing for Hildesheim and wrote but sparingly to her friends there. Instead of rebuke they sent her carefully kept diaries full of school news, and her bosom friend wrote: "Don't bother to acknowledge my letters, for if you write to the other girls I shall hear anyway." The same girl jealously watched over Cató's honor by carefully correcting her mistakes in punctuation and spelling—always Cató's weak points—before she let the prized letters start on their round of admiring readers. This girl represents the type of girl or woman friends that Cató found wherever she went, —unmorally selfless souls which the Germany of her time produced more plentifully than it does in our own "perverse" epoch with its cry for individual-

ism. Though she never made any direct demands on her friends, Cató was always glad to accept the many services that the motherly among her sex offered her. Spiritually this may have been a drawback to a nature as devoid of all "Martha" instincts as Cató's was, but practically it worked well, for it gave her all the time there was to follow her own inward bent for intellectual pursuits.

In the atmosphere of enthusiasm that prevailed among the masters and scholars of the newly opened Seminar Cató felt completely at home. Among the sixty-two women in her class she soon found congenial companions, and here as in Hildesheim she became the animating center of an admiring group. One of her inseparable comrades, an American girl, gives a vivid description of Cató's personality as it appeared to her at that time. "Her little figure," she writes, "is the most picturesque and unique of the many students I recall. I can see her now as she stood in the large lecture room, clad in her red Highland plaid dress, made with yoke and belt, buttoned down the back, the round skirt innocent of gores and coming only to her boot tops; and her hair, the color of corn silk, worn short, square cut in the neck and drawn straight back from the forehead with a round rubber comb. Her age must have been

just eighteen, but the impression made was of sixteen years or younger. If I call her masculine, the expression seems too strong, but certainly the carriage was commanding and the whole bearing repudiated everything suggestive of feminine weakness or dependence, a most unusual attitude for a German girl. To the care of this masterful small person who radiated strength, I was commended by our teacher. 'Cató! Cató Wenckebach! I never heard of a girl before who was christened Cató,' was my mental comment. It was her true name,—an old family name, as I afterwards found."

The young foreigner mentions as Cató's most telling traits her "intense seriousness, power of sustained work, and indomitable will that never knew defeat." One incident she tells as illustrating her buoyant energy. "It was a matter of great importance to have seats near the eye of the professor in order to get the most benefit from lectures and quizzes, and seats occupied the first day were held through a semester. We agreed to get to the Seminar early to secure desirable places. I reached the lecture room at seven o'clock in the morning, to find it nearly filled, Cató and the other members of our coterie ranged at the front desk, and the best seat of all, the one directly in front of the

professor, reserved for me, the foreigner. Catό and her friend had arisen at four o'clock, and had proceeded to the building, where they found the doors locked; unable to arouse the sleeping janitor, they had gone around to the back, where Catό, 'boosted' by Martha, had scaled a ten-foot wall, gained admission for herself and her companion, and of course had the first choice of seats. Surely no better protector could a young foreigner have, and a student could have no more helpful friend. Between the lectures the playgrounds, the corridors, the lecture rooms, were the scene of constant eager talk, almost always on the subject of our work. We five girls quizzed each other, and often as leader, as drillmaster, stood the commanding little figure with serious face and quiet, strong voice,— a born teacher."

The professors were as much impressed by Catό's work and personality as were her schoolmates. In the old school record kept for private reference, Catό is described as "possessing extraordinary vigor and most remarkable gifts for teaching." While she excelled in everything except the hated arithmetic and English, she did her most distinctive work in pedagogy and methods of teaching. Her instructor in these studies, Herr Niehaus,

was an ardent admirer of Pestalozzi, whose grace and largeness of spirit he personified in his classes. It was in a measure owing to his influence that Cató to the end of her days could proudly call herself a "disciple of Pestalozzi."

The Hannover Seminar, an outgrowth of the *Höhere Töchterschule*, shared both teachers and buildings with its parent school. Much opportunity was therefore afforded to the future teachers to watch the class-room work of all the different school grades, and to give the frequent test lessons required of them. Cató made herself conspicuous for the pains she took to render these test lessons successful. She was not only an expert in that most important of pedagogical arts, the asking of "development questions," but she also devised clever schemes for making her subjects *anschaulich*. Thus she brought pictures and other objects for illustration to the classes, and invented excellent diagrams for greater *Anschaulichkeit*.

The same exaggerated eagerness for work characterized her school life here as it had in Hildesheim. Not satisfied with her school programme of thirty-two lessons a week and a goodly amount of complementary outside study, she took a lecture course in cosmography and extra instruction in

French conversation and in piano playing. "I now change my touch for the fourth time, also my pronunciation of French," she wrote in comic despair; but with invincible optimism she immediately added that she did not "really mind," because she was sure that this also would help her on to the coveted perfection in her beloved vocation.

The small sum that an admiring old friend of the family left her at this time, she soon used up for books. "I am not strictly required to read all that I do in connection with history, literature, and especially pedagogy," she explained to her wondering relatives, "but I don't feel satisfied with the bare bones of things as you get them in lecture courses." (A reflection, by the way, on German lecture courses which will interest my American friends!) The world of mere fact was as distasteful to her as that of mere duty. And the same instinct that compelled her to cushion "bones intellectual" in the flesh and blood of human interest made her resist "bones ethical" in the forbidding form of the categorical imperative. "My days are full of work," she wrote to a younger sister, "and that means full of joy."

XIII

BUT Cató was no mere bluestocking. The same American girl who failed to discover any sense of humor in her says that she never associated her with amusements either. How Cató herself would chuckle if she could hear this! For if ever student managed to have a good time in and out of working hours, it was Cató Wenckebach, fairly brimming over with the joy of living. And a very catholic joy it was, embracing the plains of pure animal pleasures as heartily as the lofty summits of intellectual delights. Unlike the little blind mute whom, according to a Boston clergyman's version, "the Lord had blessed by shutting the main entrances to her soul against the Devil of this world," Cató was supplied with a most perfect set of sense gates to let in his Satanic Majesty. Gifted with healthy instincts and a strong moral will, her hospitable nature could afford to keep open house for whatsoever might enter. Sometimes Gluttony stole in with his grace Fastidiousness, and clamored for chocolat Lindt, caviar, or choice fruit. Instead of sullenly chasing this arch-enemy away, Cató fed him the coveted food until he left her with a weary *toujours perdrix*. With fastidiousness her tongue

Portrait of 1869

Cato Weinebach

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never quite parted company. Like the American college president who, over thin institutional soup, humorously invited the students to "bless the Lord for anything that was *good* on the table," Cató was reluctant to "give thanks" for unsavory food; nor did she enjoy being convivial with people of indifferent palates. To her, any one who could swallow a glass of Veuve Cliquot as if it were so much soda water was a true barbarian.

The girl's evident appreciation and enjoyment of good food, and the uncommon energy with which she attacked it, were the delight of many a good Hausfrau in the circle of her acquaintances. "Please, Cató, come and have *Puffer** with us to-morrow;" or, "Mama wants to have roast goose for you soon; can't you set a day?" and "Won't you come and share our *Maibowle*† on Sunday?" were requests often proffered to her and never ungraciously refused.

Hand in hand with this discriminating, if primitive, enjoyment of food went her delight in brisk exercise: in walking and riding, in dancing and skating. Skating was still Cató's favorite sport. She lived near the wide meadow lands which extend along the banks

* Potato pancake.

† White wine seasoned with woodruff.

of the river Leine, and which, by order of a fatherly city magistrate, were flooded as soon as cold weather set in. The proverbial stiffness of the somewhat anglicized Hannoverians of old gave way before the frost, just as the stolidity of the Frisians did. Chaperons being frozen out, the young people could enjoy their high time of physical exhilaration and gay flirtation. They could skate for hours to the sound of military music, only stopping occasionally to feed on hot punch and warm doughnuts served in the cosy booths. Cató, too, had her cavalier,—a relative of her spinster hostesses,—who was discarded, however, as soon as spring had beguiled him into a proposal.

Not that Cató was averse to sentiment or even to sentimentality as such. In the world outside herself, young Love, with his tears and sighs and ecstasies, was sure of her warm interest and tender sympathy wherever she met him. She wept and rejoiced with him after the approved fashion of normal youth. But the lord that had possession of her own world of feeling was Hero worship, and imperious indeed were his demands. Her spirit drooped if not continually fed by that love which, according to one of the wise men, is but "a higher form of the instinct of self-preservation," the "love for one's

own approaching higher condition." In its crude form of *Schwärmerei* (which is the much spiritualized German equivalent for the vulgar "crush") this ever hungry instinct of Cató's fastened on the most varied personalities, among them Dr. Dieckmann, the genial founder of the Seminar and at the same time the inspiring teacher of literature; on Hölty, the poet, who was a cousin of Cató's hostesses; on Fräulein Garthe, the charming young prima donna of the court theater.

Cató's passionate Garthe cult was of course shared by her boon companions. Being too modest and perhaps too sensible to express their feelings in billet-doux or flowers, they walked them off before the windows of the adored object, preferably under the shelter of dawn or darkness. One morning they had the intoxicating pleasure of seeing "her" and her companion step out of the house and walk towards the Eilenriede, the large forest in which Hannover sips its morning and afternoon coffee. For the sole gratification of gazing at the back of their idol the girls followed her, softly, yet at an ever diminishing distance. Suddenly the ladies stopped, turned, and stared at their mute persecutors, who halted and cast down their eyes in utter confusion and shame. Only Cató dared to look up, and in doing

so caught a smile that made her thoroughly disgusted with herself. From that day on, she put a stop to her own lovesick meanderings as well as to those of her companions, and contented herself with seeing her heroine on the stage.

After Fräulein Garthe had left Hannover Cató turned her back on the opera (for Wagner had not yet risen on her horizon) and spent all her spare pocket money on the drama. Since she loved to be in a crowd, and was willing, even in the coldest weather, to wait and jostle for her seat (costing twelve and a half cents), she could afford to mount Olympus at least once a week. The mere sitting in the theater was a joy to her. Perched on her well-earned front seat she lost herself in gazing at the splendor about her,—at the radiance of gold and red in the balconies and the royal boxes below, at the rich paintings on ceiling and curtain. From the curtain picture, a dashing creation of Ramberg, the gifted favorite of George III of England, Cató received a deep and lasting impression. Pictures never interested her overmuch, but this one of Ramberg's in every detail—from the resplendent Apollo who urges his quivering steeds onward, down to the workmen that in the sketchy background mount the towering scaffoldings of the unfinished

theater—so clearly sang of Cató's own eternal joy of motion and growth that she could listen to it spellbound until the performances began.

These, fortunately, more than fulfilled what the "painted veil" had promised. Thanks to the ever watchful interest and intelligent sympathy of the princes of the house of Hannover, and thanks also to the true zeal and pure genius of actors like Karl Devrient, Marie Seebach, Hermann Müller, and others, the Hannover court theater had early developed, and now religiously maintained, that high standard of art which ever since Lessing's days has been a distinguishing feature of the German stage. This standard demands that a poet's work be reverently treated as an organic whole, and that the actors in their representations aim at perfect simplicity and naturalness. It condemns as inartistic all vainglorious star-showing, all pompous posing, all crude neglect of so-called minor parts. It also repudiates the idea still current in other civilized lands that the theater fulfills its mission if it satisfies the hunger of the many for mere shallow amusement. In serious Germany, where the theater, as Carlyle expressed it, "is of the very life of the nation," the worship of the tragic muse, yes, even that of Thalia the joyous, has gradually become

a grave and solemn matter. Its financial support is the pride of sovereigns and citizens, and regular and intelligent attendance upon it a mark of common respectability. Families subscribe for their theater box as they rent, or used to rent, their church pews, and even those who go to church on Sunday morning attend the theater Sunday evening. For Sunday is the day when especially fine performances are offered; when the school-children are given opportunity to see the classic drama they study; when music students can hear the masterworks of the great German composers, and when the common herd can get a lift out of their world of sordid cares into Schiller's realm of pure humanity. Under the management of highly cultured men such as Bronsart von Schellendorf* and Hermann Müller† the repertoire of the Hannover

*The distinguished pianist and composer (brother of the one-time minister of war) who in 1869 was appointed business manager of the court theater in Hannover, and in 1888 accepted a call to the Weimar theater.

†The actor and literary manager of note whose severe classical taste and high ethical standards exercised a strong influence on the dramatic representations of the Hannover theater during the latter half of the last century. To illustrate how the best actors of the time were filled with the consciousness of their high cultural mission I quote the last sentence in Müller's *Das Königliche Hoftheater in Hannover*, 1884: "May the theater of Hannover, protected as it is by the grace of princes and the warm support of an educated public, continue to be what it has been for so long,—a temple for the purest cult in the service of noble German art! God grant that it be so!"

theater in Cató's time was perhaps more rigidly classical than the general public liked; but for Cató this circumstance was but an added joy. In her "heaven" above the royal box she fed on Shakespeare and Goethe, on Calderon, Lessing, and Schiller, to her heart's content. According to her own statement none of her later spiritual joys ever surpassed those which she felt while she thus "experienced" Macbeth, Nathan, Iphigenie, Tell. Like Nietzsche she came down from the heights of such great art as one who, "changed into a tragic character himself, . . . could return to life in a strangely comforted mood, with a new feeling of safety, as if after the greatest dangers and excesses and ecstasies he had found his way back to the limited and the homelike; to a place from where a more distinguished intercourse with our neighbor is possible, if not a superior kindness."

XIV

WHILE school and theater were thus attuning Cató's exuberant sense of health and delight to the full thorough bass of eternal principles in human life, the Church, the third important factor in the training of the average German, exercised no positive influence whatever on her. It was a Lutheran clergyman, however, who more than any other one individual helped to temper her superabundant animal spirits into harmony with the Good, the True, the Beautiful. Hermann Hölty, whom whimsical fate had ordained minister of an orthodox church, was a grand-nephew of his greater namesake, and, like him, a poet "by the grace of God." Being a devout worshiper of a moral *Allgott* and a man of universal culture, he bore his official religion gracefully and without the slightest taint of phrase. Here at last Cató met a clergyman in whose speech and manner she could not detect the faintest suggestion of ostentatious pose or of the "rattling of the slave-chains of dogma." Cató's throbbing enjoyment of life, her physical soundness and purity of race, and the childlike mixture in her mind of narrow concentration and dreamy vagueness, so characteristic of the high North, seem

to have attracted the poet. She was frequently invited to join a merry symposium in his home, where, over Havanas and a bottle of choice wine, he told his spellbound listener what she most liked to hear, —stories of Walhalla and of the heroic deeds of her forbears recorded in the Edda. He also recited his own poetic visions of water fairies and storm giants, of Saul's disintegrated soul and of Ratbot the Frisian, that heathen prince who refused baptism, preferring to go to hell with his kindred.

Among the life-giving germs that Cató's mind received in the atmosphere of animation and elevation prevailing about the poet pastor was a deep and glowing patriotism. It was in the first year of Cató's stay in anti-Prussian Hannover that all the German states, under the lead of stern and stanch Prussia, had at last risen in jubilant union against their common enemy in the west; that the German armies, directed by the genius of William I, Moltke, and Bismarck were fighting their fateful victories at Wörth and Spichern, at Metz and Sedan; that Paris was finally seized, and that in the palace of the old Bourbons at Versailles the German princes unanimously proclaimed William of Prussia emperor of reunited Germany. Hölty's patriotic muse accompanied the "awakened Titan"

in his march of destruction and his work of regeneration. Often of an evening while busy hands about him, Cató's included, were raveling soft linen for the wounded, the poet recited his sorrows and joys, his fears and hopes, for the Fatherland. Cató, who but a few years ago had vowed eternal hatred to "impudent Prussia," now became keenly alive to its greatness, and contributed her share of the pride and love and loyalty that at this time quivered through *lieb Vaterland.*

Through the whole year that this war of Germany's deliverance lasted, there was, even in Hannover, the stronghold of the resentful Guelph party, no end of joyful celebrations. Cató, of course, was bound to take part in everything. Whenever the news of the victories came in, she joined the crowds that in public places spontaneously vented their rapture and gratitude in singing patriotic songs and sacred hymns of praise. In spite of a nervous fear of fire she set up rows of burning candles on her window sills whenever an illumination was the order of the evening. After the arrival of the host of captured French soldiers whom Hannover harbored for a couple of months within a high board-wall inclosure, Cató spent a good many odd moments in watching the strangely picturesque

"shakoes" and "red bloomers" through the knot-holes. Like other humanely inclined Hannoverians, she smuggled cigars, chewing tobacco, and broken words of kindly interest through the same channels. In January, 1871, when the capitulation of Paris was celebrated, she jubilantly took part in the peace pageant. Clad in white and sashed in black, white, and red, amid the pealing of bells and thundering of cannon, she walked in the procession to the *Waterlooplatz*, where, in front of the Leibnitz monument, the common joy burst forth in one grand heaven-storming chorus of exultation and awe. Nor did she miss the climax of the whole, the return of the soldiers, who on June 20, with wives and children clinging to their arms, marched through the city fairly laden down with the wreaths and flowers which from windows and balconies were showered upon them.

XV

IT was fortunate for the young "pioneers of women's higher education" that the sea of high excitement had calmed down when, in the spring of 1872, the time for the state examinations drew near. These, like all official school examinations in Germany, were both written and oral. They were taken in the presence of the commissioner of education, and extended over several whole days. Expecting certain failure in arithmetic and Biblical history,—the requirements for which latter subject consisted in the minute memorizing of one hundred church hymns and of about as many Biblical stories,—Cató went to the examination feeling as if she were assisting at her own funeral. In her "notes" she does not elaborate on the events of the examination proper, but gleefully records what followed it. "The thirty *Schulamskandidatinnen* [candidates for a teacher's post] nervously moved about in the second-floor corridors of the *Höhere Töchterschule* among a crowd of mothers, sisters, friends come to hear the result of the examination, which was soon to be communicated to them. The 'pioneers' were shrouded in black silk and looked ghastly pale in the light of the one oil lamp that

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shone on their misery. At last the door of the conference room downstairs opened and the line of solemn-looking teachers slowly emerged. All, including the *Schulrat* [commissioner of education], who headed the procession, wore their Sunday dress suits and each carried a flickering candle in his white-gloved hand. In absolute silence they advanced up the stairs and moved into the large assembly hall on the third floor, followed by the dumb, tiptoeing victims. When all were seated, the teachers on the platform, the students on the benches facing it, and when the *Schulrat* had enjoyed his somewhat lingering address, we were told that all of the candidates had passed, and that four of them, myself among them, had passed with high distinction. The joy was indescribable: it bubbled forth in tears, in laughter, in embraces, kisses (the *Schulrat* almost got one, too), and, last but not least, in telegrams home." "I have passed everything, even arithmetic and Bible; my luck has been prodigious," was Cató's message to her proud family.

The teacher's certificate that Cató had just won represented the highest honor which until 1897 the Prussian government ever awarded to its women educators. It entitled the holder to teach in

families and private schools as well as in the lower grades of the girls' public high schools. All the more advanced classes, those in sewing and conversation (French and English) excepted, were in the hands of men, and all controlling influence also was theirs. Cató had at no time looked forward to enjoying the privileges granted to her in a teacher's certificate. She possessed neither the humility nor the selfless spirit of devotion that were needed to overlook the intellectual depreciation to which a masculine government subjected its women teachers.* Her aim in studying had been to study, not to get a certificate. Her parents wanted her to return home and teach her sisters, but did not put the slightest compulsion on her. So she easily persuaded herself that it was best for her, for the present at least, to follow her own strong craving for new sights and new experiences.

Of all the foreign countries that she hoped to visit, England was in many ways the least attractive to her. Although in character and race she had more in common with the English, perhaps, than with her own German brethren of the South, she never cared either for them or their language. The amus-

* Compare what she says about this subject in Part III., chapter xxiii. page 178.

ing recipe she gave for the pronunciation of English shows clearly how it appealed to her. "Take the five vowels," she advised the student of English, "mix well and swallow. When thoroughly ruminated, spit them out with much hissing, sputtering, and gurgling."

In spite of these prejudices against her cousins across the Channel, she accepted a position as governess in an English family, hoping to find comparative freedom from interfering supervision and a larger scope of activity in England, where a growing circle of the cultured classes acknowledged the superiority of German methods of instruction.

All Cató asked of life were new possibilities of intellectual growth for herself and a fair chance to foster such growth in others. That her chosen vocation would help her most efficiently to pursue these ideals she confidently expected. At the farewell gathering of teachers and students around the traditional bowl of punch,—the emblem of social cheer in Germany,—Cató, amid the general toasting, declaimed on the teacher's life. "And if," she wound up her youthful piece of rhetoric, "misfortunes come to us that at times will make our days seem like a starless night, let us remember that our

vocation is our life, and that God is the light of our life!"

Before she left Hannover she once more with her comrades visited "the dear, peaceful schoolrooms, the spiritual home of golden years of youth." "It is with deep sorrow," she wrote, "that we leave this place in which for years heart, mind, and spirit have been nurtured by faithful teachers. Happy those who can remember this blessed place with sincere gratitude and childlike longing, who, when out in the cold, strange world, will be spurred on by the memories of warm blessings enjoyed here to do unto others as has been done unto them."

PART III
THE WANDERER

You cannot really know your fellow beings until you have looked at them from the position of a dependent. C. W.

XVI

LIKE the youth whom Schiller depicts as "launching into life hoisting a thousand sails," the young teacher, one day in May, 1872, set sail from Hamburg on her quest for self-development. A consuming eagerness for work and a buoyant spirit of adventure prevented sad thoughts at parting, nor did her nineteen years know any fear. The fact that she was the only woman on board — her traveling companions being seven burly business men — did not trouble her in the least, though it made Auguste, who saw her off, quite uneasy. A bond of lively comradeship seems to have been established immediately between the men and this breezy girl, who suggested anything but the charm of feminine frailty and dependence.

After an "unusually short" trip of but two days and three nights, the steamer reached Edinburgh. With exultation Cató greeted the "sentinels of splendid rocks" at the harbor, and with growing exuberance of spirit she traveled through the lovely Scotch country to her first "home station," a large estate in Perthshire. The scenery, with its lyric change of "hill and dale," and its fantastic shapes of rocks and ruined castles, appealed to her enthusi-

astic love of nature, and furnished a fitting background for her soaring and thoroughly romantic expectations of life.

Cold reality grasped her, however, as soon as she reached her future home, where she was received with perfect courtesy, but with an aloofness of manner which checked her exuberance of spirit at once. In a short time the proud girl had learned the hard lesson which, especially among Anglo-Saxons, governesses are never allowed to forget,—that in spite of her superior education her position in life henceforth was to be that of a subordinate. Having grown up among a people who thoroughly honor and respect the educators of their children, Cató never could become reconciled to this most puzzling feature of her experiences in England. "Among the English," she wrote, "the title of governess just raises you above the servile class without admitting you into the sphere of those who can afford to pay for your services. And it is not enough that a governess here must renounce all claims to social intercourse, she is also given to understand —sometimes in the most tactless manner—that she has no right to expect even the common courtesy of being introduced to the friends of the family. 'Oh, she is the governess!'—with some such phrase

the long-suffering individual is pointed out to satisfy casual curiosity and to give warning that unnecessary social courtesy need not be wasted on her. What a puzzling humiliation for a cultured woman to see herself slighted on account of her high calling, especially, as often happens, by people whose intellectual superior she is! How can a teacher possess the needed authority if she is not respected socially?"

The root of this serious evil Cató saw not only in the "materialism and egoism so characteristic of the English nation," but also in the prevalent "rotten methods of instruction,—methods which reduce the children to machines and the teachers to mechanics." "Little or no emphasis," the devoted disciple of Pestalozzi and Froebel exclaims, "is laid on the sciences. The approved method of instruction is a game of set questions and answers which prevent the teacher not only from developing the logical faculties of his students, but also from inspiring an interest in the subjects taught."

Finding that these questions and answers rumbled about confusedly in the heads of her pupils, a boy of thirteen and a girl of fifteen, Cató determined to rekindle the sparks of thought and intuition smoldering under heaps of memorized rub-

bish. But when she set about energetically to apply the methods of Pestalozzi, the mother interfered. The latter could not bear to see her darling boy, "who had always been a model pupil,"—whose dullness, in other words, had been covered up so far under the surface sparkle of an easy verbal memory, —lose his accustomed precedence over his sister and fellow student. So the vain mother forced Cató, whose better judgment was surprised into silence by the tone of lofty superiority assumed toward her, to follow the "old, approved" routine of teaching. The lady, moreover, procured a key, by the help of which she corrected the boy's French exercises before they were handed in to his relentlessly accurate German governess. Cató's pride and professional ambition writhed under such arrogance, but common sense urged her not to battle against windmills, a Quixotic exercise toward which, as a thoroughbred Frisian, she was constitutionally disinclined. "If people insist on wanting beads instead of pearls," she wrote at this time, "why should I waste my precious emotion in urging my pearls on them? *Elk sin möge*—everybody to his taste." So she did not waste any more "emotion" on this case, but calmly decided to serve out her year in the comfort and pedagogical unconcern that the ap-

proved English methods allowed their propagators. Finding, however, that the girl's instincts and tastes were for the best that education could give, Cató's indifference at once changed into the alert interest of the born educator. To help the "bright, brown-eyed young sylph" she cleverly persuaded the mother that it would be better for both boy and girl if they could be taught separately. The mature tact and dignity with which, even in her young days, Cató could handle questions of importance to her, no less than her high-minded disinterestedness, evidently won the confidence of the fond mother, for the schoolroom supervision was relaxed and, for a time at least, methods made in Germany were tacitly allowed to crowd out the native article.

The two girls soon became good friends. "Young Sylph," in return for the goodly number of extra hours that her indefatigable companion spent in her instruction, could give "Young Bear" many valuable hints in neglected conventionalities such as society manners and dress. Thus the ugly duckling was persuaded to stick a few peacock's feathers into her unsightly plumage,—one in the shape of an evening dress with a long train, which, under her pupil's laughing supervision, she practiced "kicking

about gracefully;" another in the form of a high chignon "which," she declared, "even the servants here have to wear in order to preserve their respectability. Mary," she goes on, "patiently teaches me to pad my skull with thirty shillings' worth of wool, which, in this atmosphere of padded gentility, is to prevent my head from being made a butt for ridicule."

Provided with chignon, train, and white kid gloves,—fetters of fashion to which Cató at no time of her life could become reconciled,—she went in for English society, although she knew that at the festive gatherings of the proud aristocrats her place was but that of a convenient music box. Her talents in that line, the shocking whistle excepted, seem to have been greatly appreciated, for they were in constant demand. How this appreciation struck the artist herself may be gathered from the following: "It is a strange experience," she writes, "to live among a people who are almost entirely devoid of the musical sense. Maybe this deficiency is in some way accountable for the proverbial social dullness of the English." With this "dullness" she must have made especially intimate acquaintance, for she mentions it in every letter she writes. In these letters one cannot fail to ob-

serve that the feelings of amused wonder or good-natured superciliousness, which the peculiarities of Cató's new neighbors at first aroused in her, gradually deteriorate into scorn and sarcasm,—corrosives that one regrets to see embitter her splendid optimism. The Scotch-English Sabbath especially, with its Jewish spirit of negation and its "pharisaical sanctimoniousness," again and again excites her indignation. "I hate the English Sunday as I hate cod-liver oil and fancywork!" she breaks out in childish wrath; "oh, for one good, strong, hearty laugh in this depressing atmosphere of ghastly tracts!" And in another letter the mature woman sighs: "Oh, for the serenity and bliss of our Continental Sunday, with its summer joys of walks and garden concerts, and its winter cheer of home conviviality and theater-going! Here one goes to church twice, or even three times, to hear an elegantly shirted clergyman read (yes, *read!*) his indifferent sermons,—sermons that are too high-flown for the plain to understand and too stupid for the educated to enjoy. But don't, please, imagine that the people are especially religious for all their apparent piety. On the contrary, I never saw a more miserable, besotted set than the lower classes among the Scotch."

I do not know whether or not the W——s were

Espicopalians; it was during her stay with them, at any rate, that Cató contracted her peculiar and marked dislike for the Episcopal form of worship,—a dislike that in later years softened, but was never wholly overcome. What, aside from the "shirted man" (*Hemdenmann*) and the perpetually recurring "miserable sinner," permanently prejudiced her against the Anglican Church may be gathered from some notes on this subject written a few years after her stay in Perthshire. "A service in the High Church of England," she writes, "is not solemn and mystical like that in the Roman Catholic Church, nor is it stern and aspiring like the worship of the Lutherans: it rather has a dry, business-like character, in keeping with the temperament of the worshipers, and consists of a series of mechanical exercises which succeed each other regularly and monotonously."

In spite of her affection for her pupil, and notwithstanding the much appreciated luxuries of life, Cató was glad when she had served her year and could leave this uncongenial Scotch clime, "in which," as she says, "the heart congeals and the mind deteriorates. No music, no theater, no intellectual intercourse of any kind,—and nature unapproachable for three fourths of the entire year."

"No, I can't stay," she wrote to an older friend who had warned her against her own restlessness; "next week I leave this dull place, hoping for interesting new experiences somewhere else."

XVII

NEW experiences the young teacher-errant was to get, but hardly such as she craved, for the year that followed proved to be the blackest and saddest of all the dark years that her "miserable governess-dom" yielded. Of the three positions offered to her by a London agent, she chose the one bringing the lowest salary, because it would, as she supposed, take her out of "bigoted" Scotland into the "somewhat freer" atmosphere of England. The irony of fate would have it, however, that a week after her arrival in Yorkshire, the family—owing to the sudden death of its head—moved into the Scotch Highlands to spend the year in mourning and fasting.

It seems that Cató's new mistress, the mother of twelve children, five of whom were under the care of the German governess, was a thoroughbred miser. To save money the wealthy woman had rented a miserable house, a mere shooting-box, for the year, and there deliberately froze and starved her household.

Well-fed and well-bred Cató could now enjoy novel experiences to her heart's content. For the first time in her life she was made to understand

the full meaning of "leanness" and "meanness," —qualities that her generous instincts loathed and her mind, in some way, insisted on connecting. Mrs. Mutton-Potts, as Cató humorously parodied the lady's name, would have been a capital study for a Dickens or a Gottfried Keller. A lank, bony figure in a dingy red wrapper; hard, weather-beaten features set off by bristling red hair and piercing gray eyes; a bragging disposition; a pompous manner,—these are ingredients that real life does not often combine in one and the same person. But Cató's literary or psychological development had not reached the height from which she might have enjoyed this masterpiece of a female Harpagon. She was, on the contrary, thoroughly disgusted and unhappy; and in her "miserable rat-hole of a room, with its dim skylight and sooty walls, its shaky, scant furniture, and the heavy packing-boxes which served to keep out the squeaking, fighting vermin," could not always wrestle successfully with her rising tears. She contemplated the idea of flight, but soon gave it up as cowardly. "No!" she exclaimed; "however hard it will be to live with these people, I will stay by my guns to the very last. It would be cowardice to leave this desolate post without a struggle. What would my school companions say if they could

know that my exalted love for my vocation had already received a damper! What would my own heart feel if, after all my enthusiasm, my will should faint at the first tragic experience! To think that I meant to conquer the world, and that now I want to beat a retreat before this uncouth hypocrite! No, never!"

And it was not long before, Tommy-like, Cató had "found a wy" out of the worst difficulties. The precept of a "wise diet and self-denial," that Mrs. M.-P. preached indefatigably over the scant meals, Cató swallowed resignedly with the oatmeal porridge, the herring, the boiled potatoes, and the mutton that appeared on the table in unvaried repetition. The sordidness of her room she relieved somewhat by the addition of a writing table, a rug, and a looking-glass, articles that Mrs. M.-P. traded off to her for the promise that she would teach little Patrick to read,—a duty that had not been mentioned in her contract. The rats she frightened away by befriending an enormous cat, her alert guard and faithful companion during many dreary hours. The schoolroom presented the most puzzling problem. In cold weather it was dining room, parlor, reception room, all in one, and the teaching an almost grotesque performance. Repeated polite requests on Cató's part for a change of conditions

had been disregarded, and the oasis of her life, her teaching hours, continued to be disturbed by daily domestic squalls or, what was worse, by Mrs. M.-P.'s own aggressive pedagogy. Conditions gradually grew so unbearable that Cató, not knowing how to help herself in this predicament, was in perfect despair. Relief, fortunately, came one day through the bursting forth of Cató's own *Grimmgeist*, that spirit of elemental wrath which for the first time since her babyhood rose out of its antecultural strata to shake the vertebræ of the dumfounded adversary. "You may educate your children as you damn please," *Grimmgeist* thundered at the speechless red negligée, "but during lessons *I* demand sole authority over them. If you can't stop your confounded interference, and if you won't give me a decent, quiet place to teach in, I shall break my contract and leave you to-morrow in spite of bad roads." And with this the wrathful little woman walked out of the room, slamming the door so that it shook on its hinges. "Never again was there any disturbance during school hours," Cató triumphantly used to add when in later years she told of this exciting occurrence. Seeing the beneficent results of the fit of wrath into which her peace-loving nature had been betrayed, she henceforth

gave ire its rightful place on her list of pedagogical disciplines, and systematically applied it whenever gentler means seemed ineffective or harmful. "People in a lower stage of development," she writes, "you must sometimes fight with their own weapons of overbearance and violence; to treat them with Christian forbearance would only encourage them in their arrogance and so would but increase the sum of evil in the world."

She who in her maturer years felt such a tender love and reverence for the person and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth, at this time fairly hated the Christian religion as it appeared in the majority of those that professed it so aggressively. The atmosphere of cant that seems to have prevailed around the "majestic miser" aroused Cató's deepest indignation, for at bottom hers was a thoroughly devout nature and she strongly objected to see religious matters treated in a humdrum, perfunctory way. "All through Sunday," she related, "Mrs. M.-P. read out of the Bible and presided over family prayers. The house was as quiet as the catacombs; nothing was heard all day but that high, unctuous voice, reading, sermonizing, scolding. 'If you have to whistle, John, you will please whistle a hymn tune. . . . Frouleen, see that the children wash their

hands before they come to evening prayers.... Jane, you will go to bed without supper to-night if you do not stop your giggling this very minute.... Frouleen, tell the children a Bible story, but in German or French, if you please, for I don't want them to hear your poor English.'" Such pious exhortations, reported by Catò, explain themselves.

Almost the only ray of light in this dark and bewildering mountain world of hypocrisy, arrogance, and sordidness must have been the warm sympathy Catò felt for the children afflicted with such a mother, and the love these bore her in return. Our hearts well up tenderly toward little Patrick who one day brought his beloved Fräulein a beautiful apple that some visitor had given him, refusing to eat the rare luxury himself. We chuckle with Catò at witnessing hungry little Jane, under cover of the broad back of her kind governess, lick her plate at dinner with catlike velocity. We see Catò come home from the distant country store, her pockets filled with good things to eat for herself and the hungry children. But we like, above all, to think of her in the "disinfected" schoolroom, surrounded by an eager group of children "who study," she says, "like little nailers, if only to kill time." If they are living they may still cherish the mem-

ory of those hours in which their masterly and gracious governess told them stories about the world's history, about Balder and Loki, Siegfried and Brunhilde, and with pictures and games taught them to speak German and French.

The children, though never likely to set the river afire, were very obedient and willing, and Cató rejoiced in the progress they made. "If I could succeed in fostering the growth of but a few good fruits on this sterile soil," she says in pedagogical eagerness, "I should be as happy over it as if I had gained brilliant results from the most fertile ground." She was grieved, though, to find that her pupils had not the slightest inclination or talent for music. "But how could they," she asked, "being brought up on the howl of bagpipes and the turmoil of the Scotch reel?—these capital crimes against the holy spirit of St. Cecilia! Their mother hears neither harmonies nor discords, although her nerves vibrate painfully to every strain in the minor key. The other day when I played one of Beethoven's Largos she declared that the man who could compose that sort of music must be a very bilious fellow indeed. Since she insists that the children shall not learn anything but 'lively tunes in the major key,' my classical training is entirely thrown

away on my pupils.... The only soul here who appreciates good music is the parson, but he, as ill luck will have it, wants to marry me." After this rejected proposal had deprived her of her only congenial intercourse, her spirits gradually dropped to the point of lowest depression. "I am utterly homesick and miserable," she wrote in December, "now that nature, too, my tried comforter, has fallen into a deep gloom and looks as if she had taken the veil, never to return to a glad existence again. In less than a week we shall have Christmas, but not the slightest spark is kindled yet to receive the *Christkind* and to brighten this dark and wintry world. I have to think of you and your joys not to succumb.... Oh, the poor children here, whom the barren spirit of puritanism deprives of the most beautiful of all children's festivals, who will never be able to feel the mystic life stirring in their souls when the glad season sets in; who are denied those blessed experiences and joys which sow the seeds of glad reverence in our hearts and which out of love-takers make love-givers.... Their only Christmas anticipation was the promise of a roast turkey, but the beast sickened and to-day expired; seldom has the death of an animal caused more genuine grief.... Even music does not comfort me, for the

piano is as wretchedly out of tune as soul and sky are. What has become of my idealism that made me see the highest possibilities in the vocation of a governess! I fairly hate it now!"

The season, however, did bring some surprises to Cató, which, although wrapped in the gloom of disappointment, turned out to be glad tidings of relief—if I may use such serious language for rather comic episodes.

Christmas Eve, when, after a supper of mutton and boiled potatoes, Cató in utter dejection had retired to her lofty chamber and was trying to smother her grief under the pillows, she heard the children in evident excitement grope their way up the stairs and into her dark room. Mamma sent them, they said, to bring their governess a Christmas present. Lighting the tallow candle Cató saw, to be sure, a tiny parcel in Jessie's hand, which proved to be a small lump of chocolate wrapped up in tin-foil. This token of the miser's festive generosity so completely routed Cató's gloom that, to hide her indecent hilarity, she danced out of bed and into her clothes, inviting the youngsters to stay with her and have some fun. She got out the little presents, mostly of the kindergarten sort, that she had meant to give them the next morning, and

quite forgot herself in telling them fairy tales and Christmas legends. Fairy stories set Mrs. M.-P.'s moral nerves on edge as much as the minor key offended her æsthetic sense. She had tabooed them as "lies," and with great decision had forbidden Cató to indulge her heathenish fondness for them with the children. Hearing indirectly of Cató's disobedience, she severely sermonized the ungovernable governess, and seeing on the same sacred Sabbath that Cató, in the presence of the innocent children, calmly set herself down to read a profane novel (*Ivanhoe*, in this case) she made a "scene." On the strength of this obnoxious performance disgusted Cató gave notice and prepared to leave in April instead of June as she had planned. "After having made every attempt," she wrote, "to render my position here more dignified, the duty of self-respect forces me to give up this thankless task."

In a letter to her father dated January, 1874, she declares that she is still body and soul a teacher (*Schulmeister*), and that she will not allow the narrow-mindedness of the English to scare her away from practicing her beloved vocation. "After I have enjoyed some halcyon months in Germany and have helped you celebrate your silver wedding," she wrote him, "I want to go to France, if I can get

a position there. Political hostilities shall not prevent me.... From the following you will see that my 'soaring ideals' have changed into very practical schemes. I am sure that if I perfect myself in French I can claim a hundred-pound position in England; these English pounds I mean to help me carry out a long-cherished plan which you doubtless will approve. I have come to the conclusion that the narrowing and humiliating life of a governess is extremely distasteful to me, chiefly because this office yields neither the authority nor the independence which is needed for the exercise of one's best power. My plan is this: to go to Leipzig as soon as I have saved enough money, and to devote myself to the study of music exclusively, so as to be able at some future time to settle in one of the large German cities as a private teacher of music and modern languages. Do not think, please, that this decision is born from a sudden whim of mine. You know that my predilection for the study of music, though suppressed at times by other studies, always has been pronounced. I merely return to my favorite now that I have acquired a fair basis of general culture. My motive is a genuine love for the art of all arts, as well as a hope for greater independence. The musical education that I have had so far

makes me but a mediocre teacher of music, such as the universe harbors too plentifully already; by a two years' exclusive devotion to this art I hope to raise myself above mediocrity. I feel sure that a wish bred from sensible and pure motives, as this one of mine is, will be fulfilled some day, though, maybe, at a different time and in a different manner from what I expected at the outset."

What sense and wisdom in a girl barely twenty years old, and what a model young woman Cató would have made if that old head of hers had always ruled her actions! Fortunately—for the biographer at least—there was a will, too, an impetuous young will, that at times heeded neither paradoxes nor inconsistencies, and that, rushing to its goal, often upset the most neatly constructed card houses of her mind. In this instance it made her go to London as soon as her "prison doors" opened, and there caused her, in less than a fortnight, to spend the money she had earned during her "years of slavery,"—money for which she had planned such dignified uses. The proposition to visit the metropolis had come from a cousin of hers, a woman whom a cruelly grotesque accident had robbed of her great beauty and high social intercourse, and who from the heights of artistic suc-

cess gradually fell into the very gutters of social existence. She was at the beginning of her decline just then and craved excitement to forget her misery. With this desperate but intellectually distinguished person Cató "did" London. They were "on the go" from early morning until after midnight, Cató filling her starved senses with all the sights and sounds they could hold and London could offer. They visited palaces and slums, Patti concerts and Salvation Army meetings. They heard Messrs. Moody and Sankey harangue a vast multitude in Haymarket Theatre and saw Captain Boyton of the New Jersey Life-Saving Service float down the Thames in his inflated rubber dress, the American flag triumphantly strapped to his foot. They lunched at the Three Tuns Tavern and supped at the Old Cheshire Cheese. In proper elegance they drove through Hyde Park in a hansom, and perhaps the same day enjoyed London from the top of an omnibus.

The cousin was as enamored of England as Cató was prejudiced against it, and the superior insight which the older woman could bring to their hot discussions of English institutions and idiosyncrasies helped Cató to get a truer perspective of Albion than her own stifled existence among the

Scottish gentry had given her. Before she left the country, never to return to it again, she was ready to own, not only that the English were a great nation, but that individually they could bear comparison with their German cousins. In regard to her own special grievance she came to the conclusion that, on the whole, English ladies were "justified in their peculiar treatment of governesses, because so many ill-bred and uneducated women had smuggled themselves into the profession."

XVIII

FROM the letter quoted in the last chapter one surely would have expected to find the venturesome wanderer struggling for French and new experiences in hostile France. But it was to the opposite direction that she turned,—to the border of Russia, where she had secured a position in the family of a high German army officer. A relative of hers, His Excellency the Director of the Botanical Gardens in St. Petersburg, urged her at this juncture to visit his family before going to her post in Esthland, and she started east in August, 1874.

On her way she stopped at Hannover to freshen valued associations with old haunts and old friends. Sorely disappointed in the latter,—whose early intellectual aspirations she saw dwindling away under the sway of "frivolous occupations" such as husband hunting and fancywork, novel-reading and small talk,—she neglected their society and sought inspiration in theater and concert hall instead. From the *Flying Dutchman*, which she heard on a Sunday evening, she flew off to the train. Reaching Berlin the next morning, by third class of course, she stopped to see the sights, to have her passport indorsed in the Russian Embassy (where

she was advised with paternal interest to exchange her oil-cloth sailor of nihilistic appearance for a regular woman's hat), and to hear Wagner's *Walküre* for the first time. Without taking off her clothes (this was the second night she had kept them on) she slept a couple of hours, and "not feeling the least bit tired," as she assured her family, set out on her journey to St. Petersburg.

Her letters and notes show that from her window seat, which she procured before anybody else got a chance, she eagerly took in everything about her, from the looks and idiosyncrasies of her fellow travelers to the changing panorama outside. At the Russian frontier she laughed over the Babel of tongues and over the violent smack of Russian kisses. Encouragingly she nodded to the owner of the "tremendous paws" which in the custom house dived into her trunk and then, to her surprised delight, carefully smoothed her crumpled clothes. In the restaurant her attention was especially attracted by the big, shining samovars on the sideboard, and by the waiters in white aprons and high top-boots, who brought savory dishes kept hot on little individual alcohol lamps. The Russian trains, with their compartmentless parlor cars furnished with long benches for sleep and warmed by a stove in the cen-

ter, satisfied her social sense, while the wretched villages past which they flew, and the miserable women who, at the smaller stations, waved their flag signals, made her realize with a shock* that even but a few miles from the frontier the civilized conditions of Germany were left behind. "Our pigs are better housed than the peasants here," she wrote to a friend, "although our churches can't boast of gilded domes. . . . When I expressed to my neighbor, an interesting young Russian, my astonishment at this sudden transition, he assured me that a new time was dawning for Russia, that there was an increasing number of educated Russians ready to give their life-blood to help their nation out of the mire into which Father Tsar and Mother Church had pushed it. 'Fifty years hence,' he said, 'all this wretchedness will be no more; the Russian peasants will be educated like their more fortunate German brethren, and instead of this ghastly array of hovels in a desert land you will see snug cottages surrounded by fertile fields and rich orchards.'" How this wonderful metamorphosis was to be accomplished the young enthusiast evidently did not tell Cató; nor did she trouble her mind much about that. At that

* The author has noticed with interest that Russian travelers on their part experience a like shock. (Cf. *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, by Prince Kropotkin, page 268, Houghton, Mifflin & Co.)

time social and political problems filled her with vital interest only when she encountered them in her own field of work, in the guise of educational reforms. If she had discovered that her traveling companion was a nihilist—and such he probably was—her sane nature would have recoiled from him as from something unsound and pernicious. Prejudiced as she was against all revolutionists, she would have been little affected by the fact that Prince Kropotkin, a short time before her journey, had been thrown into the living grave of the Peter and Paul Prison. Nor would she have wasted much sympathy on the vast number of Kropotkin's fellow workers whom Alexander II, or rather his "bloodhounds" (Shuwáloff and Trepóff), had sentenced to imprisonment, death, or Siberia. The summer of 1874, the "mad" summer, had been more than usually full of political arrests, but when Cató came to Russia, "all was quiet in St. Petersburg."

So, with the unconcern of a happy child, Cató could give herself up to the fullest enjoyment of all the new impressions that through her insatiable sense of sight crowded in upon her. In later years her eyes used to glisten whenever she indulged in reminiscences of St. Petersburg's golden-domed splendor. She often told how she had walked or

driven in the Nevski Prospect — the "Corso" of St. Petersburg — in order to feel the throbbing and generously open life of this youngest and most vigorous of all the European capitals; how she stood for hours at a time on the large wooden bridge of the Neva, watching the picturesque carriages of the aristocrats pass back and forth between the "Islands" and the city; how she had thrilled with pleasure at the view of the stately river itself with its wreath of magnificent buildings, among them the Winter Palace and its lugubrious opposite, the Peter and Paul Fortress. Broad Neva, with its heavy burdens lightly carried, its ever widening course, and its generous embrace of the near Baltic, always remained to her a symbol of all that was large and free and promising. She sometimes spent her evenings in the wonderful Botanical Gardens, — a creation of her uncle's, — or in the park swarming with life, far into the short dusk of early morning. "Oh, the indescribable charm of these northern nights," she wrote in the florid style that is characteristic of her at this period; "it is as if Uranos could not tear himself away from Gæa's beauty and therefore implored Night not to hide his glorious bride under dark wings. In such nights nature sings her most beautiful hymns: magic songs composed of the

soft patter of petals, the perfume of roses, the joyful voices of birds, the rippling of brooks. Scarcely has the haze of dusk touched the fields when the sun of a new day bursts out from the east."

An interesting episode of these eventful days seems to have been the advent of her prized box of books which had been held back at the frontier for the mysterious purposes of the Russian censorship brush. On opening it she found that whole pages in her volumes on history, especially Russian history, had been "deluged with the blackest and densest of printer's inks. This is the way," she remarks, "in which a paternal government tries to hide from the knowledge of its subjects any facts which could enlighten the children of the Tsar about his and his predecessors' 'fatherly love' for their people. What a betrayal is this muffling of the living truth!—for the pitch-dark blots certainly reveal more than letters could. I am glad to see, though, that they have had sense enough not to put up a flag of mourning over the glorious deeds of Peter the Great."

Another welcome occurrence was a letter from Cató's prospective employer in Esthland requesting her to postpone her coming for three months. Independent Cató, who already dreaded the two

"evils" she was to meet in this position—the loneliness of a country life and a religious atmosphere, two things she had learned to abhor in Scotland—annulled her contract at once. About one of her attempts to get another position she used to tell amusingly. It seems that through her relatives she got an introduction to a Russian princess who wanted a German governess for one of her daughters, and who appointed an hour when Cató should present herself. "It was the first time during my plebeian existence," she related, "that I was granted an audience with a real royal highness. Of course I had no idea of court etiquette, and I was considerably flustered when the great day came. In the secrecy of my room I had assiduously practiced making court bows such as I had seen on the stage. Besides, I took unusual pains with my toilet,—put on my best bib and tucker and even replaced the feather in my Berlin hat. In spite of all this there must have been something funny about my appearance,—though this did not occur to me until I was safe at home again,—for the Swiss guard who opened the door of my carriage, as well as the liveried lackeys who conducted me to the state apartment, looked amused. I had scarcely settled myself in one of the gilt chairs, when the great lady, a languid, slender,

swaying body, entered. I popped up to pop down again instantly in the way I had practiced. Looking up after my performance I saw Her Highness smiling behind her handkerchief. '*Mais, ma petite,*' she said when she had composed herself, '*vous êtes trop jeune, trop jeune; je ne comprends comment*' . . . and without another word she graciously intimated by gesture and look that I was dismissed and that I need not go through my polite gymnastics again. So I merely made a short military bow, which seemed to upset the lady again, and by the help of the smiling footmen and the grinning guard was back in my carriage five minutes after I had left it."

Two weeks after this her first and last contact with the world of high-caste ceremonial, she was on her way to the Caucasus. The position had been offered to her by telegram, and she had accepted it in the same way without knowing anything about the circumstances but that, for the salary of six hundred rubles and a home, she was expected to teach German and music to the children of a Russian government official in Tiflis.

Again her passion for traveling had got the better of her serious purposes in life. With Faust she might well exclaim, as she did in one of her letters: "'Alas, there dwell two souls within my breast!'

The one longs for the quiet work of the educator and warns me not to rush headlong into this unknown world; the other drives me on irresistibly to see the glorious Orient."

XIX

HAVING, as she says, fitted herself out with the best of luggage for this trip,—a large portion of good humor and pluck spiced with the knowledge of a few pat Russian phrases,—Cató boarded the Odessa express on a bitterly cold October evening. With intense pleasure and excitement she looked forward to her week's journey through strange and beautiful lands, and not the slightest misgiving clouded her joy of expectancy. Calmly she listened to the commiserations and critical comments that her talkative traveling companions, after an inadvertent disclosure of her destination, showered upon her in three languages. "Tiflis?" shouted one; "is n't that a place beyond the Caspian Sea?" "No," corrected another, "but it's a robbers' haunt, nevertheless." "Why," said a third, "how inexcusable to let one so young go among those savages all alone!" Only Cato's taciturn neighbor, whom the obsequious conductor called "*Madame la Baronne*," and who smoked ten cigarettes in one sitting, puffed her approval of the courage of "*la petite*." "With a reassuring smile," Cató used to relate, "she offered me some of her choice nicotine and ordered her maid to bring us

Madeira. This was a signal for the other ladies to dive into their provisions, and in their turn produce some liquid that would fittingly flavor the hearty '*bon voyage*' with which they all drank to me.... What a simple, hospitable, companionable race the Russians are, and how cruelly the despotic government misrepresents the true genius of the people.... I soon felt quite at home among these thoroughly human creatures, who chatted with me (some of them through an interpreter) as if they had known me all their lives.... The only thing that I can't as yet get accustomed to," the reserved Northerner wrote home, "is the Russian predilection for kisses and embraces. What an exuberant demonstration of these at every station!" She got her share of it, it seems, when she reached Moscow, where she changed trains and took leave of her kindly companions of the night.

In her impatience to get a glimpse of "Matúshka Maskwá" (little mother Moscow) which her fancy had surrounded with a halo of romance, she hastened into the streets as soon as the train stopped, to take in all she possibly could during the two hours that she had at her disposal. Finding that walking on the "execrable Asiatic" pavement was a slow process, she took a drosky, ordering the

caftaned Iswoshtshik to drive her up to the Kremlin. From this famous capitol she knew she could get a bird's-eye view of the resplendent city,—that general impression that her mind craved before it could find satisfaction in details. The barbaric splendor of the picture spreading before her—the fantastic shapes of the white-walled Asiatic city and the gay and motley coloring of its buildings blending with the luster of countless crosses on the gilded, green, or blue cupolas of Moscow's four hundred odd churches—must have fascinated her, for she lingered so long that she escaped missing her train by one second. Such little adventures are never mentioned in her letters to her anxious relatives, who only learned from her that in Moscow "every fourth house is a church." In her notes she is more communicative as regards both facts and fancies. Here she also put down the gist of her quick observations in an apt comparison of the two Russian capitals. "St. Petersburg," she wrote, "is like a smart military officer covered with brilliant decorations, while Moscow rather resembles a venerable Eastern patriarch arrayed in sumptuous robes."

After her short but all the more inspiring visit to this gay, jeweled bit of the "Orient," the bleak steppe that spreads out between Moscow and Odessa

seemed only the more desolate. "Nothing to be seen for days," she sighed, "but a dead, leaden sky under which there are immense stretches of yellowish grass or of snow dotted with croaking ravens."

All her interest now was concentrated on the people about her, whose languages, customs, and physiognomies more and more reflected the conglomerate of nations and climes which the Russian empire represents. "From Kiev on," she reported, "there was no ladies' compartment, and civilization became chimerical. Women and men, Aryans and Mongols, crowded in together and smoked side by side. Jews in caftans and Gentiles in sheepskins appeared, and among them a number of the genus 'long-fingers.' After several things had mysteriously disappeared, I took the precaution to spread over my traps with my whole body so as not to get out of touch with them."

During the fourth night she reached Odessa, "a beautifully situated, but horribly dirty city of Jews," where she had to stay until the next afternoon before she could board the Black Sea steamer for Poti. "A host of grimy and greasy hotel-keepers, all of Aaron's tribe," she wrote, "fell upon my poor Christian body before I had fairly got out of the train. They fawned on me as if I had been the

golden calf, jabbering German, gesticulating, whining, each one forswearing his soul and calling on God the All-Just to witness that *he* had the cleanest, the cheapest, the most elegant rooms to offer. I shouted to them in plainest German that I wished to be let alone; I turned my back on them and walked off; but all was of no avail,—like angry magpies they swarmed about me, skipping and gabbling. Then I got furious, and beckoned to some mounted Cossacks I espied in the distance. This helped. In one instant my persecutors had vanished as if by magic, and I put myself into the care of the polite, though grim gendarmes."

Next day she was on the Black Sea, desperately sick at first and "creeping on all fours" because of a storm that made the steamer bounce "like an electrified dragon's tail." But she soon revived, to revel in the legendary and historic associations about her, in the beauty of nature and clime, in the rich mosaic of life on the steamer. The steerage especially, with its picturesque inmates, fascinated her. "Here were Turks praying and bowing to Allah at intervals; fierce-looking Caucasians smoking delicate cigarettes; Russians with '*nitshewo*' written on their heavy faces; lazy Greeks, cunning Armenians; and running between the groups of men,

half-naked children and ragged, haggard women."

Being the only woman passenger in the cabin, Catò became the object of much gallantry on the part of her French, Polish, Russian, Armenian, and Georgian fellow travelers. But so insensible was she to the privilege of their company and attentions—even to the roses stolen for her by a Caucasian prince from the impèrial gardens at Yalta—that she politely refused their escort during the long halts which the "General Kotzebue" made at Sebastopol, Feodosia, Kertsch, and Suchum Kaleh. Amusingly she told afterwards how an infatuated German youth, arrayed in "stovepipe" and "flaming" kid gloves, tried to attach himself to her for a walk in Sebastopol, and how she got rid of him by climbing uphill over such steep and jagged cliffs as his new elegance forbade him to attempt.

"Without any burdensome attachment," she relates, "I wandered about among the ruins of the demolished fortress, the Tauris of old, where in barbaric antiquity Iphigenia shed the blood of strangers in honor of Artemis, and where but twenty years ago the 'most Christian' nations slew each other in the name of Christian civilization. Climbing up to the ruins of a Greek temple I sat down on the luxuriant grass that covered the rubbish

heaps and furnished food to a number of goats grazing near me. From here I could gaze over the vast heap of sad ruins,—of sacked streets with here and there an isolated new house rising from among them,—and I could also watch the busy life of the shore, promising new growth and wealth.... What a sermon of alternating life and decay a place like this preaches! Over the ruins of antiquity lie those of modern times; the future will rise triumphantly above them both, only to be made part of the common ash heap when its turn comes....

"At last we came to the gloriously romantic coast of mighty Caucasus. Glaciers glistening in the sunshine rose against the deep blue of the sky; range after range of jagged mountains towered in the distance; rugged cliffs rose abruptly from the sea, all of them densely covered with the wonders of southern vegetation and touched by the glow of autumn. Innumerable dolphins played about the boat, spurting up crystal sprays from the blue ocean.... One of the rocks near Gagry was pointed out to me as the very bed of torture on which, according to the Greek legend, Prometheus, the father of man, was chained by wrathful Zeus.*...

* From here on, this account tries to reproduce what Fräulein Wenckebach has told the author personally.

In Suchum Kaleh, our one Caucasian landing place before Poti, where the steamer rested two hours, I adventurously walked into the market place which was heaped with the most luscious grapes I have ever tasted. I handed a small silver coin to one of the old sales-witches, whereupon she gave me such an abundance of fruit that I had to leave more than half of it behind. With my load I sat down in the grass by a well in the main thoroughfare, and while I devoured my grapes I looked out on the strange shapes of men and women passing me,—Amazons, some of them with babies strapped on their backs, astride of awkward but fiery little horses; Lesghians in the traditional *bourkas* (capes) and high conical fur caps; stalwart Cossacks in picturesque attire. How long I may have looked at this living picture-book I don't know; but I suddenly noticed that darkness was setting in with uncompromising quickness. Of course I immediately started in the direction of the shore, but soon lost my way. In sudden realization of my daring I tore through the totally dark streets, falling into the mud pits and stumbling over the heaps of rubbish and stones. As I did not see how I should ever escape out of this labyrinth, I rushed into the first lighted house I saw. Here I found a fur-capped Caucasian baker squatted down

among his wares in an open-air shop window. For all the German, French, English, Russian idioms that I showered at him, together with some silver coins, he could offer nothing in return but a large loaf of bread and a volume of unintelligible sounds accompanied by frantic gesticulations in the direction of his loaves. There was nothing to be done but try again somewhere else. So, groping my way along the houses, I stopped at another lighted shop window. Here I scarcely had opened my mouth when a turbaned giant rushed upon me with a dagger, frightening me into a quick run. Although it soon dawned upon me that my dagger-man was but a harmless hair-cutter armed with a huge pair of scissors, I began to be seriously alarmed and to reproach myself for forgetting that I was an unprotected female and so ought not to have tried to study Asiatic civilization at its source. As if to punish myself then and there for my transgressions, I fell into a deep pit and actually groveled in dust and ashes. But from the depth of this very pit I heard a sound which to my anxious heart was like a note of heavenly music,—a steamer whistling in the darkness ahead of me! I clambered out and made off in the direction of the welcome sound as fast as my shaking limbs would go. How I got on the

steamer I scarcely remember, but the exasperated captain assured me with angry expostulations that he had held the steamer an hour for me already, and that he was just about to take in the gang plank when I appeared. I determined that, henceforth, I would try hard to combine my curiosity with caution."

And so she apparently did, for without further adventure she traveled through the woods of Circe and the land of the Golden Fleece, arriving in Tiflis on the twelfth day after her departure from St. Petersburg.

XX

"ALTHOUGH I arrived here at midnight," Cató reported home, "Babúshka (this is what the whole household calls Madame de X's kind old mother) was up to welcome me. The warm embrace she gave me, the rich meal served to me at that late hour, the large basket of roses which I found in my cosy room, all told me that in my new surroundings I need not fear a repetition of my experiences in Scotland. Although I might have known that the genus Mutton-Potts does not grow on Russian soil, I felt immensely relieved, nevertheless, slept soundly, and was up early next morning to look about me."

And she opened her eyes wide indeed at the luxury around her, at the Oriental splendor of the rooms, at the countless servants. Hearing that the nine children, aged from two to twelve, had as many as six tutors and governesses, she wondered if anything could be left for her to do. Madame de X, a very cold, but exceedingly beautiful woman of Caucasian blood, soon reassured her on this point. "You will rise at seven," she told her, "and be present when the little boys are dressed. From eight to twelve you will give your music lessons. From

two to four I want you to walk with some of the children, and talk German to them. After the five o'clock dinner you will play kindergarten games with the younger ones and help Wera and the three older boys with their lessons. At half past nine you are free to do what you choose, and two evenings of the week you will have entirely at your own disposal. I shall also expect you to furnish part of the musical entertainment at my receptions, but for this you will be paid extra." Cató was much taken aback by the heterogeneous tasks devolving upon her, and by the manner of the lady, "who seemed accustomed to have her dependents dance to her wire-pulling like so many marionettes." But she promised herself and Madame de X that she would try to do her best. And this she seems to have done with all her accustomed zeal and honesty. There is a touching letter from her eldest pupil Wera, dated December, 1875, in which the affectionate girl thanks her "dear Katinka" for all that the year of her stay with them had meant to her pupils. "You were to me all, dear Milinki,—all," she says; "and I know what I had in you. You were my governess the best in all the world, and a friend none better I can find." The same letter tells of a number of *gouverneurs* and *gouvernantes* that had come and

gone in quick succession after Cató's departure.

What the trouble was in this family is expressed vigorously in the notebook which swells enormously in the Caucasus. "I punished mischievous little Georgi to-day for continually disturbing us during study hours, by putting him in the hall outside. His screams brought down upon me the wrath of Madame de X, who told me *once for all* that I was *never* to punish the children, that that was a right she reserved for herself *absolutely*. Having experience already of what her favorite punishment is,—a 'mild persuasion' made emphatic by the promise of bonbons or a shower of fondly reproachful pet names,—I ventured some remonstrance; but I was silenced by a hostile look from those most fascinating eyes, and by such quotations from the lady's favorite pedagogists as: 'Never treat children roughly, but always honor in them the image of God;' 'Gentleness and calm are the prime virtues of the good educator;' 'The teacher's tranquillity and love form a rock, as it were, against which the impetuosity of the pupil is broken.'" To handle impertinent and lazy boys with the kid gloves of indulgence was decidedly against Cató's pedagogic instinct, but the infatuated theorist remained deaf to all arguments.

In a few weeks inexperienced Catò had learned to understand that Alexander's obstinacy was nothing but firmness of character; that the lies of Georgi only showed a wonderful imaginativeness, and Basil's uproariousness a wealth of energy; Feodor's destructive spirit, she was told, clearly testified to his thirst after knowledge, and Wera's hysterical sentimentality to her remarkable depth of feeling. "To punish these young geniuses for faults which in reality were uncommon virtues, and to oppose their wills needlessly, would mean a crippling of their originality, a throttling of their youthful joyousness. The whims and moods, therefore, of the youngsters were carefully cultivated so as not to interfere with the free development of their individuality."

If Catò had needed any punishment for her unruly conduct toward her own governesses of the past, she got it here under the yoke of relentless Madame de X's new-world views on education. The lesson was sweetened somewhat by the strong psychological interest which the kaleidoscopic personality of the "advanced" pedagogist seems to have afforded to single-minded Catò. Having lived among the more or less homogeneous types of ripe European civilization, she had never met a person in

whom so many contradictory natures existed side by side in seeming barbaric isolation. The calm scholar and the brilliant society belle Cató could harmonize, but how a woman could be an over-indulgent mother and at the same time a cruel and relentless taskmaster, went beyond her comprehension.

In this connection she wrote home after Christmas: "Madame de X discontinued her studies in order personally to conduct the domestic symphony at this season of parties. Everybody is kept in a quiver of fear whenever she takes the reins of the household out of the hands of her intimidated old relatives, for at such times everything has to go *tempo prestissimo*, or the whip will come down hard on the poor beasts of burden, her own aunt and mother not excepted. Yet on Christmas Eve this slave driver suddenly appeared as the most adorable of hostesses and most enchanting of rulers." For the benefit of her sisters at home Cató enumerated some of the remarkable playthings the children received,—"toy cows that yielded real milk; dolls furnished with Parisian stays, genuine jewelry, lorgnettes, etc.; a monthly magazine publishing the newest fashions in doll land; a battalion of toy soldiers provided with detachable knapsacks, guns,

and horses. These luxuries swelled the contents of the already over-crowded shelves in the three large apartments that were reserved for the exclusive use of the children, without in the least increasing the content of their *blasé* owners. If the poor little Mutton-Pottses only could have had some share in this generous gift-getting! However, when I think of Jane and her joy over the ball made for her out of old kid gloves, and contrast her delight with the matter-of-fact way in which these spoiled youngsters received their costly presents, I come to the conclusion that too little is better by far than too much."

The species of the *blasé* and affected child was a novelty to Cató. She studied this grotesque product of wealth and folly with wonder, devoting many pages of her notes to comments upon Wera the sentimental, and the infantile coxcomb Georgi. It seems that the twelve-year-old girl had contracted a morbid fancy for the hero of a French novel, a young aristocrat of the time of Louis XVI. "In order to get closer to the object of her dreams," the notes tell us, "she would play the part of a rococo marchioness,—lace tightly, powder her hair, and adorn her exquisitely sensitive face with beauty spots. When I warned her that she would surely

faint some day if she did not stop lacing, she exclaimed: 'Ah, but that is just what I long to do, for in my French books the true aristocrat always faints.' Georgi, the chubby-faced eight-year-old, also had his *tendre attachement* and could act the lovesick knight to the complete satisfaction of his mistress in miniature.... At the children's soirées, which were conducted with much solemn formality, playing with toys was tabooed as being too childish. Forfeits, conversation, dancing, and eating were the only fashionable methods of entertainment. The favorite three 'honor questions' for redeeming forfeits were: 1. Have you smoked yet? 2. Do you intend to get engaged soon? 3. Don't you hate your governess? Approved topics of conversation were furnished by the weather, the candy stores, the governesses. Remarks about the weather were considered most *distingué*, especially languid complaints about the heat. Perfect gallantry was expected from the 'gentlemen' on these occasions, and the rules that under all circumstances had to be observed were,—not to crush the ladies' dresses; not to upset coffee cups or wine glasses; not to cry. To refrain from the latter was especially difficult in cases where the knight was requested graciously to part with his pudding or bonbons in order to bestow

them on his hungry mistress. Even Georgi, who was a model cavalier, almost cried on one occasion when his adored mistress Sacha took from his plate a large piece of delicious cake. He was fortunately able not merely to control his rising sob, but, with a deep bow and a polite smile, to offer her his ices too.

"All this affectation in the nursery afforded infinite amusement and satisfaction to Madame de X, who frequently watched the diminutive gentlemen and ladies from behind a safe portière. She of course knew that Georgi was paying court to Comtesse Sacha, but what she did not know was that the young scapegrace had inveigled the French governess into relaxing her watch over him, so that he might enjoy undisturbed *rendez-vous* with his lady in one of the secluded garden pavilions. . . . Sacha, who lived next door, was bribed into this attachment for Georgi chiefly by the splendid hussar uniform that he put on whenever they met, and by the sweets that the boy brought her from the large box containing his mother's favorite pedagogic sedative. . . . One day, as I was reading in the garden, during a rare hour of leisure, I heard the prattle of childish voices from the pavilion near me. 'Say, my beloved,' said Georgi, who was evidently smoking

his father's strongest cigarettes, 'did you have a good time at the entertainment of Baroness Eugenie last night?' 'A good time!' mocked Sacha's angry little voice; 'it makes me furious still to think of it.' 'Do you mean to say,' quickly interrupted the boy, 'that one of the gentlemen'—'Oh, no, dearest,' piped the girl, 'it was not the gentlemen this time; they behaved most correctly. No, it was Eugenie's mother. You know how *retardée* she is in her views about education. Well, she actually requested us not to dance, but to play with our toys instead. You can imagine what a stir this extraordinary proposition created. I myself was on the point of asking the good lady if she was not aware that we lived in the nineteenth century.' 'Absurd,' exclaimed Georgi, 'really absurd. Dear Sacha, if you had not told me yourself, I could not have believed that such things were possible in our circle.' 'Ah, but that is not all,' the girl continued with pathos. 'To add to our discomfort, Eugenie's *gouvernante omineuse* stood guard over us all the time we were there, so that we could not say one sensible word to each other.' 'These despicable governesses!' Georgi shouted, thumping the table; 'I wonder of what earthly use they are. It seems to me that they do nothing but *incommoder* people in general, and us in particular!'

'Yes,' Sacha acquiesced with a deep sigh, 'they suppress all individual feeling in us, and moreover are full of the most ridiculous *prétensions*. You, by the way, *mon ami*, ought not to complain, for your mother does not tolerate their interference.' 'Yes, *ma chèrie*, you are right,' coughed out Georgi (who was not nicotine proof yet); 'on some matters *chère maman* really has most advanced ideas.' 'Ah,' cried the little comtesse enthusiastically, 'your mother is a most cultured lady, and *si belle*, besides. By the way, don't you think that the new *Mademoiselle est très jolie?*' '*Eh bien*, passing,' said Georgi languidly. 'And how do you like that little stump of a German governess?' asked Sacha. 'She is n't bad,' Georgi answered; 'in fact, I heard *maman* say that she had some rather commendable traits,—but excuse me, dearest, I suddenly feel so dizzy . . . it's the heat, I suppose.' 'Why, yes, *mon pauvre petit garçon*, you look very pale . . . here, try my salts.'

"But the salts could not prevent the sudden catastrophe that was to prove fatal to the continuation of romantic love-making."

There can be no doubt that the substance of this conversation was based on facts, for Catò shows a curious inability to deviate from the historical truth of personal experience for the sake of fiction.

Her notes and numbers of her letters generally agree down to the smallest details in their descriptions of actual events and impressions. Even in her novels (unpublished), the purely fantastic and the empirical refuse to blend harmoniously, and in point of subject as well as style one can readily separate the unmistakable elements of experienced and fancied matter. In view of this it may be doubly interesting to take cognizance of some of Catô's Caucasian impressions as she herself has put them down.

XXI

"THE city of Tiflis stretches along a broad valley crossed by the zigzag course of the roaring waters of the Kura (the famous Kyros of old) and hemmed in on either side by barren limestone mountains. Its half-Asiatic, half-European character is at once apparent in the party-colored mosaic of Oriental and Occidental contours of life,—unpaved roads winding between the cube-shaped *sacklis* (earth or stone huts of the natives); fashionable boulevards lined by the luxurious villas of the wealthy Russians; venerable old castle ruins on the mountain slopes looking down on the conventional abodes of the European middle class; splendid French stores and dingy Caucasian booths; Russian nurses in richly embroidered red or blue gowns with the elaborately dressed children of the rich, and the Caucasian mother astride a lanky pony with her infant strapped to her back; Cossacks, Greeks, Armenians, Tartars; grimy Jewish peddlers; beggars in gaudy tatters; packs of hungry dogs; and the 'four hundred,' in elegant coaches, driving at lightning speed through the motley throng....

"Witnessing the inroads that the conventionalizing European influence is making on the distinctly

Asiatic character of this city, one feels like stretching one's hands protectingly over this fantastic bit from the land of the Arabian Nights.

"To the European visitor the native Georgian element is of course of first interest. The Grusinian, Gurian, Mingrelian, or whatever the native may call himself according to his special tribe, lives in a house without door or window; he exists practically on corn bread, fruit, and grass; he drinks his fiery Caucasian wine, but hardly ever eats meat. Even the wealthier Georgians often live in this way. Their women wear long white linen mantles (*tschadras*) that half conceal the face. These dark-eyed creatures of classic form look exceedingly attractive on the outside, but

'Let no man ever long to know
What fearsome chaos reigns below.'

In other words, what the dainty white rags discreetly cover is something frightful, and could be analyzed only with the help of insect powder and fire-tongs. The men, each with his *bourka* (a fur cape) and high fur cap, and with a glittering dagger stuck in his belt, present the handsomest *genus homo* I have ever seen, especially during the warm season when they exhibit only their fine brown birthday clothes. . . .

"It often happens that a porter is a native prince, and that a washerwoman, who is drunk every evening, was born a royal princess. Many of these fallen royalties have become robbers, and commit crimes that recall the darkest middle ages. We therefore have two special watchmen in our house and at night four more outside. When we go to the opera we always have to engage a Cossack to watch over our coats and hats, in spite of the fact that there is a goodly number of mounted police before the theater and a guard of twenty soldiers inside. This is all a consequence of the new liberties that Alexander II has granted to these half barbarians here; for a few years ago one could walk about late at night with perfect safety. . . .

"To educate future generations of its Caucasian subjects to a higher standard of ethics the Russian government has established first-class high schools for boys and girls. With what success may be seen from a recent occurrence. A sixteen-year-old girl, belonging to one of the best families of Tiflis, revenged herself on her teachers by setting fire to the school at midnight. The deed done, she escaped out of the window into the arms of her swain, with whom she fled into the mountains, the favorite refuge of outlaws and fugitives since time

immemorial. These people may be made to put on a coating of Western civilization, but inside they will always remain Caucasian savages: '*Grattez le vernis,—voilà le Scythe!*'

"The morals of many Europeans here, the army of governesses not excepted, are in a sad plight, too. France and Switzerland evidently suffer from an over-supply of *femmes de chambre*, who, when they find it expedient to disappear for some time, buy a ticket to the Caucasus. On the way they swallow ten cents' worth of *savoir faire;* their courage and their impudence rise together, and at Tiflis they make their exit from a first-class railway carriage, labeled 'Authorized Governess.' Poor children—poor boys especially—who fall a prey to such experienced frauds! The other day our French governess had to be dismissed because she was discovered entertaining six army officers after midnight in her innermost chamber. Have such creatures, who dare to call themselves teachers of the young, no trace of conscience left? Fortunately the children have other opportunities for culture than that offered by these rotten French oranges which are only preserved externally by a thick coating of rouge.* . . .

* This is a prized instance of one class of Cató's metaphors.

"Intellectual life is of course chiefly fostered by the German colonists, who count among their numbers noted scientists and musicians. But there is an Italian opera company here that, in spite of difficulties, gives far better performances than I saw in the Grand Opera House in Edinburgh.

"All the people about me are members of the Greek Church. This, with the educated Russian, means only a perfunctory observance of external ceremonial. To be sure, anybody who lays himself open to the charge of heresy is considered a suspicious character by the police, but so long as a Russian subject observes the main feasts and ceremonies of the national church, he is counted orthodox. How little spiritual and moral significance the Church has for the average Russian may be seen from the humiliating social position which the parish priests occupy, and from the fact that such a priest himself never lays any claim to spiritual influence with his parish. He is a sadly ignorant individual, and generally has no idea of larger intellectual and spiritual issues. The old Russian proverb, 'The hair is long, but the mind is short,' is more applicable to the long-haired priest than to the women for whom it was originally meant. To cover up these defects the Russian Church has

taken care to give much importance to the spectacular element, which strongly appeals to the Slav. The great Church festivals, Epiphany and Easter in particular, are operas with incense, as it were, accompanied by showers of kisses."

In April, as Cató's home letters report, the whole family, including grandmother, parents, aunts, nine children, dogs, domestics, and mountains of luggage (over-freight on toys and clothes alone was one thousand rubles), set forth from Tiflis by rail to take up their spring quarters in Zarskoye Zelo, near St. Petersburg. "Three quarters of an hour spent in bekissing and becrossing ourselves, and away we went in our nomad's wagon over the marvelously beautiful mountains. Unfortunately our view was often cut off by babies' clothes that were hung up by the windows to dry —certainly a reminder that the unlovely prose of life always intrudes itself when it is least wanted. At Poti we spent the night on a little tug that was to carry us to the 'Cesarewna,' the largest Black Sea steamer, next morning. When we set out, the sea, which, by the way, has extremely weak nerves at Poti, was tossing about madly, while the rain fell in torrents. The consequence was that our tug and the big ship made each other the deepest court

bows and declined to do business. Both captains, scolding from the decks, absolutely refused to sacrifice a boat for the dangerous transfer of the passengers. Finally some one suggested the crazy idea of laying a gang plank from deck to deck. This the wind again and again hurled down into the water. At last the devil's bridge lay still for a moment, and Madame de X, some of her children, and I tore across. We hardly were safe on the other side when we heard a cry and a crash. The plank had again been flung into the water, and the gentleman who carried our youngest boy barely escaped going with it. The passengers now angrily refused to cross, and so one of the captains at last launched a boat, which carried its load of fainting and seasick people safely to the big ship."

XXII

"IF I were novel-mad, like so many women of our time," Cató wrote to Fräulein Friederici, her old friend in Hannover, "I should not lack a romantic background and enough wildly fantastic situations to supply a perpetual Mühlbach* with dime-novel nonsense. But the earth is already so well saturated with watery gush like that, that I should not want to add my drop to it."

Apparently, however, the temptation offered by copious notes and vivid remembrances was too strong to be resisted. I have in my possession a manuscript novel written in one paragraph and spreading over no less than two thousand octavo pages closely covered with Cató's characteristically neat and energetic handwriting. Cató did not begin seriously to work on this romance of colossal dimensions until some twelve months after she had left Tiflis. But she collected most of her material for it while staying in Russia, and her experiences in the Orient stimulated the conception.

This novel is truly a fearful and wonderful production, intensely interesting from a psychological and biographical point of view, but quite an

* *Mühlbach*, millstream, — a play on the name of the novelist.

impossible creation if the first test of art—that of unity and moderation—be applied to it. It contains plots sufficient to feed a hundred ordinary romancers, and a wealth of dramatic situation such as a Fenimore Cooper or a Conan Doyle would be proud to invent. It is not all chaos, though. Two distinct worlds are discernible, the one of fancy, the other of fact. The latter concerns itself with the life of a German governess named Carla. The other presents the character and adventures of a Caucasian robber chief called Gorokki; the connecting link between the two being the romantic love that a Russian count, enemy of Gorokki, bears to Carla's fair German friend, who is a governess too, but one of noble descent. Around these chief actors in the dramatic epic of passionate love and friendship, of fanatic patriotism, of hatred and intrigue, are grouped a vast number of characters, some of which are taken from real life, while others have been spontaneously generated out of a startlingly adventurous fancy. The reader is made to move in the company of English and Russian nobles; to associate with the nihilists and members of the "Third Section;" with the German middle class and the Caucasian rabble; with Armenians, Turks, Georgians; with Jews and Gentiles, Mahometans

and Parsees. And the background on which these kaleidoscopic shapes move, shifts from Germany to the British Isles, from France to St. Petersburg, and from there to Tiflis and the Caucasian highlands.

To orient oneself in this bewildering maze of characters and events, of lyric descriptions, dramatic dialogues, learned discussions, is no small task, and fairly impossible on a first reading. A second perusal, however, unfailingly reveals the romancer's remarkable force of characterization as well as the exuberance of her imagination, and makes one regretful for the lack of instinct for artistic composition that prevented the cosmic shaping of this rich chaos.

Ethically, the novel is interesting on account of the mellow tolerance that is shown in the author's dealing with her characters. The most interesting character ethically and æsthetically is the Lesghian Gorokki. He is the *Uebermensch* in the pseudo-Nietzsche apprehension of the term: a colossal, if crude, composite of Faust, Mephisto, and Satan. To the biographer he is especially interesting as embodying and anticipating Cató's later enthusiastic predilection for Jakob Boehme's mystic conception of the oneness of *Liebegeist* (love, rea-

son) and *Grimmgeist* (wrath, passion), and of the importance of *Grimmgeist* as the individualizing root of all things.

Aside from the figure of Gorokki, the most vivid feature in the book is the picturesque historical background. With much imaginative force, and, so far as I can ascertain, surprising accuracy in regard to accessories, the author depicts one of the last insurrections of the "free mountaineers" against the supremacy of Russia. Gorokki's almost inaccessible retreat in the heart of the snow-capped masses of fissured rock reminds one of Gunib, the scene of the famous Schamyl's capture by the Russians in 1859. The descriptions of costumes, manners, and scenery are evidently the result of minute observations and careful reading. Her warriors wear the national *bourka* and high fur cap, they are armed with daggers and *kiushals;* but one is no more allowed to forget the living man under his strange outfit, than his fleet horse under its Oriental trappings. Although chiefly concerned with the Lesghian's life of a warrior,—with his wild-cat climbings, his fanatic onrushes, his cruelty and bestial drinking bouts,—the writer gives also a glimpse of his domestic existence. One sees him in the treeless

Daghestan *aouls*,* one meets him in his *arba*,† or finds him on "the roads that are no roads," guiding his frightened horses past caravans of their stately and grotesque brother camels. Countless little touches are skillfully worked in to enliven these pictures of strange and fascinating Oriental life.

I should like to quote at length from this part of the novel, but when rendered into English Catò's romantic style is even worse than her ordinary prose. Not only is it highly metaphorical, but it also contains a superabundance of clever word combinations that defy translation. Her propensity for puns is, moreover, allowed fullest play, and also her Jean Paulean predilection for weighing down a noun with a heavy chain of attributive phrases. These defects mar most of her literary expression. In later years they were the chief cause of her abandoning her literary ambition. If she could have *talked* her books, she might have created something lasting even in the line of pure literature. Treating her defects of style with patience, I must confess that I felt more human sympathy and interest for the Caucasian after the reading of Catò's

* Gray villages consisting of terraces of cube-shaped houses built of rock.

† A creaky all-wood carriage drawn by buffaloes.

youthful and crude representation of him than I could muster after working through some "authorities" on the subject; and this in spite of the fact that Cato's own sympathies in this case were not on the side of the vanquished, but with the victorious Russians.

XXIII

ALTHOUGH Cató left Russia when she had been there scarcely a year, it was not because she disliked the country and its inhabitants. The breadth and tolerance that in her eyes seemed to distinguish the Slav above all other races struck a sympathetic chord in her. The Russian's inborn sense of the brotherhood of all men, and his capacity for overlooking practical issues in the pursuit of an idea, made strong appeal to her. "It is good living among the Slavs, with their sovereign contempt for money," she used to say, "provided you are not a governess. . . . A governess has as hard a time here as anywhere else, for the Russians, in their eagerness to follow the rules of French etiquette, outdo their French models, and carry the system of chaperonage, especially, to senseless extremes. They demand that their governesses stand guard over the children continuously, not only during the six school hours, but at all times. So these X angels, boys and girls alike, are never allowed to be alone, not even in the house or in the garden. I am teacher, *mademoiselle la sentinelle*, and, when the cherries begin to ripen, I shall probably be scarecrow, too. I can understand how one should want to establish

an eternal watch over royal princesses whose fragile reputations generally need to be carefully preserved by etiquette, but I fail to see why one should sacrifice one's shoe soles and all the free time one might have to simple children of the nineteenth century. When Madame de X asked me who took care of the German children outside of school hours, I told her that *der liebe Gott* did that, and that in Russia the Virgin Mary might properly be intrusted with the charge. Since I am not supposed to read or write or study when at my sentinel post, I have begun to *patern** again from sheer despair. . . . My prime object in life is still to educate, but the vocation of governess has nothing in common with that of the educator. What a shame it is, for instance, that nothing can be done to help Wera, this loving and gifted but morbidly self-conscious young creature, to find her way back into childlike simplicity and happy unconcern! But her mother stands between her and all well-meant outside influences, and so deprives the governesses of the most beautiful, if most difficult, task that their vocation yields. To be sure, it is the mother's supreme right to guide the education of her children. But why do not mothers, if they need a governess to help them

* Cf. page 88.

in this all-important task, come to some previous understanding with the latter about methods to be used and pedagogic principles to be followed? Why do they insist on treating us as tools that may be pushed aside at any moment? In my extensive correspondence with mothers I have found that the gist of their letters was invariably the following:

"Dear Fräulein [oh, how I hate this 'Fräulein'!]: I want to engage a governess for my daughters. I hope you are able to undertake French, German, music, and drawing. Please include your photograph and testimonials in answering. Salary 60–80£. Yours truly, N. N.

"If the ladies had wanted to bargain for so many bales of cotton, they could hardly have been briefer. . . . No, I am tired and sick of this state of things and refuse to be a governess any longer. I should vastly prefer to stand at the street corners offering tallow candles for sale. In that trade I should enlighten the world much more effectually than by my Sisyphus-like activity under a taskmaster who, like Madame de X, constructs 'infallible' schemes of education from books, but who has no idea what the real needs of her children are. . . . I have saved two hundred and fifty rubles. With the help of these I shall try to get what I so much long

to have,—a thorough musical education." "Please help me," she writes to her faithful teacher friend at Hannover, "to find some private school in France where I can give a few German lessons in exchange for good instruction in music and Parisian French. Equipped with more music and French I shall be able to secure a hundred-pound position in England, and so, maybe, save enough money by and by to study music at the Leipzig Conservatory."

Cató, it will be observed, never asked her father for money. However different from the average German girl she may have been, she yet fully represented the "type" in her reluctance to claim anything but the merest pittance for her own education while there were sons to be provided for. Although she knew that there was a large income, she was also aware that with the ever increasing family of children (there were seven girls and two boys now) expenses had grown heavier, and that already the reserve funds had been sacrificed for the idol in so many German families,—the eldest son. While Cató labored honestly to save a few hundred dollars for a dignified purpose, her brother Claus was spending thousands in the pursuit of fast and fastidious living which he hoped would bring him the longed-for social recognition among

the aristocratic set at the universities. At eighteen Cató had made herself independent, and never claimed another cent from her parents; but her brother at thirty was still unable to provide for himself, though he had used up all the money that might have been available for the education of his sisters. Conditions like these the German girl, with her carefully nursed ideal of self-effacement, not only accepts cheerfully, but fosters with all her "weak strength," and Cató was no exception to this rule. There is never a word of dissatisfaction to her parents or of reproach to her brother in any of her letters, and when, in 1883, the capable but vain, selfish man at last passed his final state examinations no feeling was expressed but pure joy over his success. Meanwhile Cató plodded along bravely in the hope that better times might be in store for her.

Asked why she would not consider accepting a position in a German family or a girls' school she writes: "Of course I should enjoy more social respect if I worked in a German family, and I should not run against a thorny hedge of educational nonsense, either. I should also be treated cordially as a member of the family; but that is the very privilege I dread, because it would involve

my being expected, from mere motives of friendship, to help the busy Hausfrau sew, dust, cook, and what not.... If I were born a martyr and had been brought up on the whey of resignation I might enjoy being a fifth wheel on the teaching staff of a German high school for girls, and I might learn to live on a woman's salary of two hundred and twenty-five dollars per year. As it is, I not only resent the favoritism shown to men in the unequal distribution of educational advantages, of teaching opportunities, and of salary, but I am also keenly sensible of the fact that, beside an overwhelming majority of better educated, better paid, more highly respected men of naturally aggressive inclinations, a woman teacher could not exercise either a very deep or a very wide educational influence. And *I* could do this least of all because I am not cut out after the pattern of *Edle Weiblichkeit* such as the Fatherland is alone willing to recognize and honor.... The times will change, of course, and bitter necessity will compel the German women themselves to shatter such a juggernaut of an ideal; but that state of things is a long way off."

To a musical friend who wanted to be a professional musician, but who met with hot opposition

from her family, Cató wrote at this time: "I am extremely sorry that the prejudices of your family will make it impossible for you either to teach music or to play in public. For what is the use of all study if it has to be carried on merely for the sake of one's own development? I am afraid that neither of us quite fits in with our century, or, living as we do in our time, that we ought to have been born men instead of women. Ours is an unfortunate era of transition, and the deficient half culture that women are granted now is worse, perhaps, than total lack of education. For it makes us but conscious of our own 'whited' ignorance and kindles in us a restless desire to become man's intellectual equal, to be able, like him, to hammer out our own fortunes, and by our own exertions to earn a life that will satisfy both mind and heart. If we lived but two centuries later, *you* would be allowed to be a performing artist and would still be considered a lady, and I myself might—now don't smile!—but I just *might* perhaps be a regularly appointed professor at some great and glorious university.... For the present I have given up all larger educational ambition as futile. In looking into my future now I behold myself wedded to my beloved Beethoven, gloating over a rich trousseau of music and shel-

tered under the wing of a mother-in-law in the shape of a Bechstein *Flügel* [grand piano]. In such surroundings all the jarring notes of my life as a governess will quickly resolve themselves into beautiful harmonies; in other words, the time will come when I shall feel grateful even to X and Mutton-Potts for my harvest of rich experiences."

XXIV

THE time for a spiritual harvest like that indicated in the last chapter was to come soon,—in a manner entirely unforeseen by Cató herself, but more or less vaguely anticipated by her friends. The latter had been well aware that while in Russia Cató had given in more than ever to her mania for burning the candle at both ends. Not at liberty to work for herself during the daytime, she had devoted half the night to collecting and sifting material for future literary purposes, to learning Russian (which kind old "Babúshka" taught her), or to studying the theory of music. In her eagerness to carry out her plan in regard to music and French she had taken no vacation, but after leaving St. Petersburg had immediately rushed into her new duties at a fashionable boarding school in Brussels. Taking all the French and musical instruction she could get, and giving four German lessons a day herself in return, she soon managed to use up the last remnant of strength she had brought from Russia. In December she contracted a severe form of nervous disease accompanied by brain fever. When she woke from her delirium she found herself in the hospital of a

Roman Catholic convent, surrounded by sisters of charity. Their tenderness and unselfish devotion must have been very marked, for they made such a deep impression on the patient that ever afterwards she reverently acknowledged that the Catholic sisters of charity were the true angels of the Lord.

While in the clutches of the delirium she had some wonderful dreams, one of which she penciled down immediately after she regained consciousness. I give it here because it reveals in a measure her deep-lying imaginative nature, which her restless activity and ever productive mood, as well as her natural shyness, generally kept veiled from the view of all but the very few whom she admitted into the sanctuary of her inner life. She tells how, in her dream, she found herself on the Nile, persecuted by huge crocodiles; how she fled before them into the desert of Sahara, where black demons tormented her, and how in the climax of agonies she suddenly heard a voice which she recognized as that of a cousin, a pupil of Liszt's. "She called out to me that she heard music, and asked me to come with her. We walked hand in hand until we entered a hall flooded with radiant light, where we beheld huge organ pipes sparkling with diamonds. Angels hovered about them, touching the keys with the

tips of their variegated wings, and the sounds of the music forthwith changed into rosebuds which we collected into our laps. All the angels had a beaming sun in their hearts, and from the center of the vast space there shone out a light so radiant that I could not bear to look at it. 'You are in heaven,' I heard a voice say, 'and over yonder you behold the dear God, and the roses that blossom at his feet are the works of men. Every man has his roses in heaven; when they begin to bud he comes and nurses them himself; if, however, he commits a great sin on earth, they wither away.' Then I looked closely at the precious plants, and I saw blood flowing from some of them; they changed their color and died. But from the radiance tears fell on the dead leaves and dropped deep, deep down into the heart of the roses (which suddenly seemed to be damned souls), where they quenched the consuming fire and grew and grew, until they had changed all about them into their own substance. The eternal light drawing these souls onward made wings grow on them, so that they could fly upward and take their places among the blessed. Trembling with awe and bliss I whispered, 'Have I any flowers in heaven?' And a voice said, 'They are in your lap; take them down to earth

with you and see that they blossom there.' . . . After this," the incorrigible realist adds, "I never dreamt of heaven and its angels any more. Owing, probably, to my long fasting, I had hallucinations, instead, of a prolonged and enthusiastic feasting on large quantities of roast goose, liver sausage, and salt pickle."

Barely recovered, she insisted on taking up her full work again and on playing at a concert given by the school of music. The consequence was that she had a relapse, and that one of her sisters had to fetch her home. She must have presented a ghastly appearance, for Eberhard, the baby boy, and Mariechen, the nine-year-old, broke out into sobs of fright on seeing her.

The result of her sickness and of the softening influences of a long convalescence was that she determined to do what she had expected least of all of herself,—to stay in Upgant for the next few years and devote herself to the education of her ill-taught sisters.

During the long hours of leisure that her life, lived somewhat apart from her surroundings, now left her, she tried energetically to realize the day-dream of literary production which had haunted her from time to time ever since her happy days of

school compositions. Around this new interest all her surplus forces of imagination, emotion, and intellect concentrated themselves so exclusively and ardently that even the study of music lost its attraction for a while. Everybody in the household knew, without showing curious concern about it, that Tösi was "up to something." She cherished solitude even more than was usual with her, and for two years immoderately indulged her passion for late hours. She finished her novel and she also wrote a number of essays. The latter are characteristic attempts to attain a more balanced judgment of questions concerning which she keenly felt out of harmony with her surroundings and times. Thus, among other subjects, she discussed the requirement of needlework in girls' schools; the tendency in Germany to have girls taught by men rather than by women; the aversion of the government to woman's higher education; the overestimating of the ceaseless, and often useless, activity of the German Hausfrau, and the complacent attitude of the latter toward women of intellectual interests. In spite of her own strong aversion to these things, especially to needlework and the aggressive ideal of an ever bustling Hausfrau, Cató, in these clever argumentative dialogues, allows Laura, her imaginary oppo-

nent, to carry her point with convincing eloquence. In only one of these pedagogical essays does Laura suffer a complete defeat, and this is when she tries to defend the *raison d'être* of fashionable finishing schools.

Two years and a half thus passed in congenial work and perfect peace of mind,—mellowing influences which brought back much of Cató's inner poise. But her thirst for adventure was not yet quenched.

When in the spring of 1879 Helene, the most ardent and spirituelle among the Wenckebach sisters, won her teacher's certificate in Hannover and came home ready to relieve Cató of her responsibilities, the latter was more than willing to be disburdened. Although she loved her home, she never liked to stay long in "intellectually barren" East Frisia. This time her new literary ambition helped to make her restless and dissatisfied. She felt that if she wished to produce anything worth while, she must live in the large world again, rub against it and fight with it if necessary, but by all means absorb it through every sense. For that price she was willing to suffer "slavery" once more. So she "sold herself" again,—this time to a wealthy New York merchant of North German birth, a self-made

man who wanted a governess for his family of boys and girls.

The Upganters in general, and Cato's family in particular, gasped at this newest and most startling eccentricity. In the minds of the people about her, who had gained their ideas of America from stirring magazine articles and dime novels, from Cooper's tales and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the land of dollars was peopled with wicked slave drivers and wild cowboys, with heroic Indians and hypocritical Puritans; and New York, of all America, was held to be the infernal meeting place of the worst elements that the New World harbored. To be sure, farmer Jansen's son and shoemaker Petersen's daughter had made their fortunes over there, and some of Frau Marie's own third cousins had gained a comfortable livelihood in Illinois; but these reassuring items were easily overlooked for the pleasure of the grewsome sensations that America, and especially New York, conjured up in the imagination.

Cató herself seems to have been much impressed by the importance of the step she was about to take. With unusual care and deliberation she attended to the preparations for her momentous journey, and, contrary to her wont, personally supervised all necessary details,—from the purchasing of extra thick

wool for hand-knit stockings and underskirts, to the construction of an "American" trunk. According to the regulations of the North German Lloyd, a first-class passenger had a right to one cubic meter of space in the hold. Cató meant to fill this space, and so had a trunk built accordingly. This trayless structure, lined with pink paper (pink was her favorite color) and decorated with much brass on the outside, was so huge that neither private carriage nor official coach could carry it. Nothing but a springless open hay cart would do; and such a wagon it was that, on a July morning at daybreak, rattled Cató in true immigrant fashion over the brick-paved roads to the distant railway station. The family had been grieved at this unexpected emergency, but Cató was in no wise disturbed by it. The old passionate *Wanderlust*, that had gnawed at her peace all through the last months, was upon her so intensely that any sort of motion was welcome, and the voyage was one prolonged, delicious sensation to her, from the day she left Bremen (August 3, 1879), to the morning when, after a "quick" trip of fourteen days, the "Neckar" entered the "wonderfully beautiful" New York harbor.

PART IV
THE AMERICAN

Among all the places I have known I have never lived so completely as in the freedom here.

The greatest blessing Heaven can bestow on mortal man is to let him find full satisfaction in his daily work. C. W.

XXV

"THE sight of New York and its stupendous sky-scrapers," Cató wrote home, "the scenes of frantic welcome at the arrival of the boat, the rush and roaring life in the custom house, made me quite dizzy." Her dizziness increased when she opened her trunk and beheld the confusion within,—her books on top of her hats, her heavy boots inside her one silk dress of state. She had cautiously insured the trunk for four hundred dollars, and somebody had evidently ransacked it in search of the supposed treasure. But she easily comforted herself on seeing that "the grinning custom-house officers desisted from investigating this Sodom and Gomorrah."

With intense expectancy Cató then sallied forth into this New World that was to become her second home,—the rich arena for all her restless energies, which had long craved the large scope of activity that the Old World obstinately continued to grudge to women of her stamp. Instinctively she felt that here at last she was in the atmosphere which her exuberant nature needed for its full expansion. With wonderful ease she dropped all bands of European prejudices, sinking her whole,

unshackled self into the new life that opened before her enchanted view.

This ease and the unalloyed pleasure with which she adapted herself to her new environment were partly a result of the absolute independence she was granted in her domestic life. "Strange to say," she wrote in regard to this, "I am allowed at last to enjoy the bright side of governess existence, an experience which at first seemed quite uncanny, for one must get used even to good treatment. In former positions I generally had recourse to the trick of imagining myself as being two distinct individualities,—the governess and the human being. Only in this way could I manage to preserve my self-respect and inner harmony. This dualism is happily not necessary any more. I am treated with the greatest deference and kindness, and so feel thoroughly at home in my new surroundings." Not long after this she wrote to her sister Helene: "If you wish to see Europe, take your positions there soon, before you come over here, for when you once have been in America, you will never again be satisfied to be a governess in Europe."

It is characteristic that Cató, in her remarkably voluminous letters from New York, says very little

on the whole about her life with the N. N.'s, a family of "honest plodders," as she calls them. Here and there she touches upon her domestic relations, but quickly dismisses the subject to plunge into descriptions of ever fascinating New York.

What impressed her most powerfully about this city was the largeness and breathless intensity of it all. "I am entirely under the spell of the tremendous impression that New York is making on me," she wrote. "Broadway especially overwhelms me. *That* you must see with your own eyes if you want to get any idea of the mad time-is-money spirit that rules the jostle and rush of the motley crowds there. Old wizard Goethe must have had a conception of it when he wrote his *Walpurgisnacht*. And yet what a difference between the tumultuous striving on the Brocken as Goethe has depicted it, and this genial and large enthusiasm for business revealed on Broadway. Shopping here is not a burden, but one of the chief joys of existence. I often join the crowd on Broadway, or go into one of the gigantic department stores, in order to feel more intimately a part of this whirl of humanity. It is everywhere apparent that the lean years following the civil war are over, and that

America has once more entered the sign of Mammon. There is something so bacchanalian in this dance about the golden calf that even the looker-on is carried away by it. *Sempre prestissimo* is the tempo of the mad music to the sounds of which everybody rushes forward in order to get as big a share as possible of the dollars which fortune is pouring over this land. And there is no fear of a lasting financial stress, for if America does fall head over heels occasionally, she always falls, catlike, on her feet, and in an instant is up on her tree of success again. No wonder that the general interest is 'Business,' and that the conversation often circles about dollars and cents. Nor does this interest necessarily signify meanness or crudeness of spirit, as it would in Germany. Business is a mighty king here, and the dollars are his genteel vassals. Why, down town you will find whole streets inhabited solely by dollars and their human attendants. Down town, by the way, is as far from our house in Madison Avenue as Norden is from Upgant. Accordingly, the conception of distance varies considerably from that current in Upgant. The other day I asked a caller who was about to take a trip, where he was going. 'Oh, just to Europe!' was the answer. When I was questioned as to my destination on

the steamer, the usual comment was: 'Oh, only to New York!' These two little words *only* and *just* used in this connection are too classic, too characteristic, to be passed over in silence. If you can't boast a ticket to Venus and back at least, you make absolutely no impression with your traveling pretensions."

In a thousand ways Cató tried to impress her people at home with the immensity of things in the New World and the largess of spirit pervading all habits of life there. She never tired of expounding to them the beauty and convenience of the great department stores, "in which one can live all day without being morally obliged to buy anything;" she warmly lauds the generosity of the hotel-keepers who open their waiting rooms freely to shoppers, and she waxes fairly dithyrambic in describing the free libraries with their royal outfit for King Public. Enthusiastically she defends the ever slandered American ways of traffic, especially the "wondrous New York Elevated," and the much maligned Yankee methods of advertising. In the latter she found so much real genius that she forgot to be offended by it, even when occasionally it startled her in her beloved woods and parks. The beauty and size of Central Park she

pronounced unsurpassed. "Even the Imperial Park at Zarskoye Zelo," she said, "would dwindle beside this vast pleasure garden for 'His Majesty the People.'" The new armory of the Seventh Regiment she calls a splendid palace, remarking that if such a building were put up for German soldiers, there would be heard throughout the Fatherland a cry of indignation at such luxury. "America, then," she added, "is the fabulous land that is willing to spend more on her soldiers than Prussia does. That means an enormous taxation of course, but strange to say, you never hear an American grumble about the high taxes he has to pay—listen to this, Frisians! I wish East Frisia could belong to the United States but for a short half year; in a jiffy Uncle Sam would make her hustle and forget to grumble."

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XXVI

HOW enthusiastically Cuba spoke of the large idealism that permeates America under its thick coating of material interest can be seen from her notes on a novel she had planned to write in New York. "In this country everybody is, in the first place, a human being, and not a millionaire, a proletarian, or a professor. Only one social caste is recognized, and that includes every man, woman, and child endowed with reason. If it is a fact, nevertheless, that this grand principle of American equality gets clouded here and there, it is largely due to the continual influx of Europeans, through whom the Old World influence is allowed to have a passing hold on American institutions. One will always find individuals who take desperate effort to graft a dry old slip of European ism on the sturdy and luxuriant young tree of American freedom, and these people are dubbed snobs and get nothing but their pains but ridicule. The healthy instinct of the nation at large will never allow the great governing principle of their national life to be crippled. We are a free people, not because we are a rich people, but because they have rejected the complicated mechanism of European social conditions which

Portrait of 1880

Cada Kinsella Oh

XXVI

HOW enthusiastically Catò appreciated the large idealism that permeates American life under its thick coating of material interests may be seen from her notes on a novel she had planned to write in New York. "In this country everybody is, in the first place, a human being, and not a millionaire, a proletarian, or a professor. Only one social caste is recognized, and that includes every man, woman, and child endowed with reason. If it is a fact, nevertheless, that this grand principle of American equality gets clouded here and there, it is largely due to the continual influx of Europeans, through whom the Old World influence is allowed to have a passing hold on American institutions. One will always find individuals who make desperate efforts to graft a dry old slip of Europeanism on the sturdy and luxuriant young tree of American freedom, but such people are dubbed snobs and get nothing for their pains but ridicule. The healthy instinct of the nation at large will never allow the great underlying principle of their national life to be crippled. They are a free people, not because they are a republic, but because they have rejected the complicated mechanism of European social conditions which

calls forth all the demons of discontent and intrigue, of arrogance and servility.... The true American holds that condescension on the one hand and servility on the other must disappear in the intercourse of man and man; that if chance has given a person a good education, a large knowledge of the world, this person has no right to use his deeper insight in order to humiliate his less fortunate brother, but on the contrary is under obligation to try to elevate him to his own level. . . . Trees which stand on a mountain, the American would say, are in themselves not greater than their comrades in the valley; so men whom fortune has placed in a high position are not in themselves greater than their equals in more modest walks of life. This principle does not breed revolutionary feeling or anarchism; on the contrary. Watch the American people, the so-called 'rabble,' on festive occasions; how thoroughly dignified and decent they are! See how calm, polite, and proudly self-possessed is the bearing of the ordinary common man! To be sure, anybody who sees arrogance and impudence in the mere absence of servility would find much to criticise in the thoroughbred Yankee. But just that quality which offends Europeans, America demands of every self-respecting citizen.... One needs only to watch the people

at a public concert in Central Park: there one finds a motley crowd of what we Europeans would classify as plebs, middle class, and *haute volée*. From their conduct, however, you could not guess that there is any vital difference in their education and social standing. For the American, even in his workman's jeans, is a gentleman and refuses to cringe before any one. If he makes any distinction in greeting he bases it on sex and not on rank. To a woman he takes off his hat, but on meeting a man, never mind who this man may be, he merely gives a cordial sign of recognition, generally a nod.... Now let a man, say a subordinate official, in Germany, meet persons of various stations of life, and see how plainly he marks their rank by the mere form of his greeting; how at one time he seems afflicted with curvature of the spine, that disease of the humble, and the next moment his backbone stiffens with a jerk. His friendly nods are reserved for his fellow clerks. Meeting the notary public he omits the nod, but raises his cap a measured number of centimeters. To the *Assessor* [assistant judge] he uncovers his whole bald head, and the judge gets a bow in addition to this elevating view. At the appearance of the *Oberappellationsgerichtsrat* [judge of the court of appeals], cap and backbone describe a deep, expres-

sive curve. And behold him when the judge of the supreme court approaches: the cap flies from the head with lightning speed, the trunk makes gymnastic contortions, and the whole subaltern countenance is illuminated with bland reverence! (Of course all this effort has been quite wasted on the indifferent superiors.) But now there suddenly comes into view an honest butcher, hat in hand, glowing with bland politeness. All appearance of the subaltern vanishes; in its place the sense of his own superior position awakes in our hero. Languidly he raises his hand without even reaching his cap. His countenance shows dignity, seriousness, self-possession. The subaltern is now the *Herr Amtsschreiber* [district clerk], an imperial German official who, if he continues to do his duty forty years longer, may enjoy the distinction of a fourth-class government decoration before he dies. Therefore—take heed how you make your bow to him, you ox-killing plebeian! . . .

"The fact that the people in Europe are more ready than the Americans to grumble and even revolt shows plainly that education has nothing to do with the getting rid of social inequalities. Germany takes first place among all nations in the importance she puts on the education of the people

and the excellence of public schools. It is not to be questioned that the school training which the German laborer gets is, both quantitatively and qualitatively, far superior to that of his American brethren. The self-possessed, dignified poise, the decent and polite conduct, of the so-called lower classes in America is, therefore, not the consequence of their better education, but the beneficial result of social equality. A government like ours in Germany, which on the one hand does everything in its power to educate the ignorant masses into thinking and reasoning beings, but on the other hand undertakes to promote and sustain artificial castes—such a government can never expect to attain that national harmony which is the prime end of all national education."

Practically the only unmitigated criticism in which Cató indulges during these first years of her contact with American life is that directed against the apparent lack of appreciation of high art as she witnesses it in the theaters, and that condemning the methods of instruction used in American schools. In elaboration of her views of the American theaters I quote one of her letters:

"Just at present an extraordinarily sensational play is being given in one of the large theaters here.

Thousands of people crowd there every night to have their nerves shaken. Of course I have been to see it! Oh, my goodness gracious sakes alive! I hope never in my life to see anything to equal it! Even the famous spectacular shows of St. Petersburg sink into insignificance before this performance. Let me try to give you an idea of it. The scene of action in one act is a big ocean steamer, a cross-section of which is represented on the stage with wonderful realism. It is night, and the moon shines. A few passengers are still walking on deck, but most of them lie asleep in their cabins. All of a sudden an infernal machine explodes in the hold with such a terrific thunderclap that even I jumped with fright off my cushioned seat in the parquet. Pillars of fire burst out of the steamer, the decks cave in, sheets of flames and clouds of smoke shoot from the cabins. The passengers, starting from their beds, scream wildly for help; little children run to and fro in agonized fear; in frantic confusion people rush upstairs, downstairs, into the flames, overboard. The captain roars out commands, and shoots down several sailors; and all the time the grewsome wails of human voices are half drowned by the clang-bang of a tremendous orchestra. The sounds and confusion reach a last-judgment-day pitch when with

a thundering crash the whole upper part of the ship gives way. When the curtain falls on this wild chaos of flames and misery, and the whole theater is filled with powder smoke, the audience bursts into a deafening roar of applause. Everybody is keyed up to the last notch; whoever does n't feel his nerves then, does n't have any, and never will have any.... The third act is a wonderful sea picture in which the remnant of the shipwrecked, clinging to a burned spar, are floating about in the dusk on the miraculously natural ocean waves. The three starved creatures divide the last drops of water; one of them dies, the others are about to kill each other, when, lo! the sun rises, revealing a sail on the horizon. It comes nearer, nearer; the unfortunate wretches manage to cry out, to signal — and at last are saved. The end is that one of the rascals who put the explosive in the boat is hanged; the other one falls four stories in an elevator and so gets his deserts. Truly, one can't ask more for one's money!

"The whole performance is doubtless a great triumph of machinery, but is n't it madness to present such a frightful catastrophe on the stage! Probably the overwrought public that has interest only for the never-before-seen [*das Niedagewesene*] needs such claptrap in order to get the excitement it

craves. If you tried to present Goethe's *Iphigenie* you would have to pay the people to get them even inside the theater.... Time is money. If the American is to be willing to spend any of this precious commodity outside his business, he must be offered something that 'pays,'—not a monotonous classical drama, but a performance which in a way combines theater, concert, and circus. For the same reason he does n't approve of pauses between the acts,—time would be lost, he thinks, if something were not going on continually." "And yet," the amused critic adds, "such is the paradox of human nature that you will find this same creature the most unpunctual of individuals in his official and social functions. He is late at meetings, late at parties, late at the play, and consequently one has to do a great deal of waiting here for 'the other fellow.'"

Her criticism of American methods of instruction is concisely expressed in a letter to her teacher friend at Hannover:

"I am thoroughly disappointed in the American schools and colleges that I have visited so far. The buildings are splendid, the equipment is most generous, the salaries are good, but the methods of teaching are antediluvian,—the same old antiquated cut-and-dried tricks of memory, just as if

Pestalozzi and Froebel and Herbart had never lived. I suspect it often happens here—more often by far than in Germany—that people have become pedagogues for no other reason than that they were too lazy to chop wood. If you want to find good teachers or people who have actually acquired a scholarly training in this country, you have to hunt them out with a lantern. The lack of exact knowledge is a great flaw in the intellectual make-up of a nation that in all other respects is so splendidly progressive."

But loath to acknowledge that anything in her beloved land of progress and liberty could be wholly and unconditionally bad, Cató adds in a postscript: "Though the American student is not so well trained intellectually as his German fellow student, he far surpasses the latter in practical ethics. How temperate and industrious these young people are in general! German university life would be out of the question here, because the American student does not fight duels, has no appreciation of the distinguished absurdities of the Corps life,* and does not drink. Viewed from the standpoint of an American student, Europe is on a very low moral plane."

* A *Corps* is a secret society among German university students.

XXVII

ENCOURAGED by the success of her journalistic efforts, which the *New Yorker Staatszeitung* printed, but did not pay for, Cató's literary ambition took stronger hold of her than ever before. Her teaching of seven hours per day, continued for three years without any other break than the Sabbath, had at last begun to tell on her nerves, and she found that she could not utilize the midnight hours for writing as she had been able to do thus far. So in 1882 she gave up her position at the N. N.'s and turned to private tutoring. "It will be uphill work," she wrote, "but I can hope for the best, because I know my business thoroughly now. For the success of this business, which will have to be pursued in the so-called fashionable world, it is necessary above all to possess—now guess what! 'A broad culture and a trained intellect?' Wrong, guess again! 'A teacher's certificate and experience?' Off again! 'Polish and refinement of manners?' No, no, indeed! But you won't guess, for it never occurred even to me until the agent to whom I applied for private pupils had told me. Said agent frankly confessed that she could not possibly recommend me to the better families unless I

put on more elegant clothes and changed my way of dressing my hair. 'The essential consideration is,' she said, 'not what's *in* your head, but what's *on* it.' So I went to a little Parisian, who knew what the matter was even before I had explained. 'If you don't want to take the trouble to dress your hair carefully every day,' she said, 'why don't you wear a false front?' I was just about to shout a determined NEVER! when she dexterously put one of those curly things on my head. And really—the little curls framed in my face quite pleasingly and looked exactly as if they had grown on my own scalp. Now if fortune comes my way, you will know what has attracted the fickle thing."

But in spite of this bait pupils did not come in very fast at first, and Cató's modest savings began to dwindle rapidly, although she economized much in her own peculiar way. She not only brought herself to live in a three-dollar room in a large tenement house on Tenth Street,—which meant a great deprivation for her,—but she also managed to exist without a piano, and, in some mysterious way, to cook her own dinners.

All the while she eagerly followed up every opportunity for work, accepting every kind of pupil, from the daughters of the wealthy aristocrat, whom

she had to chaperon and to provide with German conversation on their daily drives and walks, to the sons of a rich Jewess, whose overbearing manners Cató's diplomatic tact soon changed into an attitude of admiration and obsequious respect. She also gave itinerant instruction in advanced literature to a paralyzed lady while the latter was wheeled through Central Park, and she taught a company of clerks to write German business letters.

When at last she had secured enough work of this kind to "keep her alive," and had settled down in peace and joy to devote her free time entirely to literary production, she came to the painful conclusion that, after all, she did not *know* life sufficiently to be able to reproduce it. "After having written one long romance," she told her friend, "and having half completed a second, I at last saw that a thorough knowledge of human nature and a scholarly comprehension of facts form the top steps of the ladder of all philosophy. I then understood how foolish had been my attempt to get to the top without first learning to climb the steps leading to it. Those literary productions of mine were, in general, youthful offenses."

Aside from an occasional article to the *Staatszeitung*, which at her request was willing to pay her

now, she stopped her literary work and took up a "scientific study of astronomy, geology, philology, and other ologies and onomies." Strange to say, the possibility of a university education in America never occurred to her. "We poor daughters of Eve," she wrote at this time, "cannot, unfortunately, attend a university and are therefore doubly handicapped in our efforts, in contrast to the lords of creation who, after politely closing their schools of learning to us, and putting us off with a wretched bit of high-school education, persuade themselves that the 'intellectual inferiority' of the 'eternally feminine' is inborn.... Now that I want to compete with men I must throw off the yoke of my feminine education and try to get a thorough masculine training. In doing this I shall have to box the ears of many prejudices sanctified by tradition, and shall, in the eyes of many of my compatriots, become an inkfish and a bluestocking. But I don't care a straw. You may rest assured that in my manners I shall observe simplicity and decorum, although I feel that with my pen I should like to break down a Chinese wall.... I have enough big schemes to occupy me through life, but the thermometer of my presumption will fall,—have no fear. There are so many beneficent wet blankets for cases like mine.

I expect failures, and already have learned calmly to resign myself to them, knowing that striving and struggling always strengthen us, whether in the end we be victorious or not."

She could apply her philosophy when her first schoolbook—a text-book of physical and astronomical geography for young children—was rejected by the German publisher on account of the enormous expense that its printing would involve. Firmly convinced that *Anschauung* was the foundation of all knowledge, she had based her work on this principle, and in a book of a thousand pages had tried to reconstruct the world for the minds of the very young in graphic descriptions helped by innumerable illustrations. Clearly, it was lack of moderation again that had stranded her. But undaunted she immediately set herself a new task suggested by the much interested publisher,—that of writing a text-book on physical geography for advanced students. Here, however, befell that stroke of good fortune which settled all her difficulties and made her "live happy ever after."

XXVIII

IT was in the early summer of 1883 that a family council was held at the home of Mrs. N. N.'s young sister-in-law, on Madison Avenue, New York. The present center and subject of it was Cató Wenckebach, the chief counselor Mrs. Precht, *née* Kapp, an intimate friend of this branch of the N. N. family and formerly professor of German at Vassar College. This distinguished lady had sometimes met Cató at Mrs. N. N.'s musical gatherings, and had at once been attracted to the valiant compatriot who so evidently stood apart from her companions and yet moved among men with the joy and freedom of the elect. With keen insight Mrs. Precht had concluded that Cató's mind was too deeply pedagogical ever to win much success in the field of either literature or music; that the only place where her special genius could grow and bear fruit was the class-room of an American college for women. It was decided, therefore, that Cató should take the preliminary step of attending the Sauveur School of Languages at Amherst. The old yet ever new "natural method," that Dr. Sauveur and his staff of teachers advocated and illustrated in their class-rooms, was at the height of its popularity just

then. A large number of teachers, among whom were several college professors, flocked to his school every summer to study. Incidentally, opportunities were also offered to the teachers for getting into touch with leading educators in their own fields.

Cató, who herself at times was poignantly conscious of the fact that she had not yet found her own sphere of work, and who of late had seriously contemplated the advantages of a business career, was more than willing to try this new scheme, especially since but one dollar of the earnings that this year of journalism and book-writing had brought her was left in her pocket. Mrs. Precht also succeeded in making her accept the loan that was generously offered to cover the expense of the experiment.

Under the gay wing of a worldly-wise French lady, also of Vassar, Cató was then triumphantly conducted to Amherst. Here it became at once evident to her that Mrs. Precht had augured rightly. Her letters show how the atmosphere at the summer school immediately inspired her, and how deeply the intimate intercourse with these earnest students and teachers satisfied her. "I am immeasurably happy here," she wrote home, "and incredibly busy too. I attend two classes in German a day,

two in French, and one in — Greek! I wish I could describe the enthusiasm that is in the air here,—fathers, mothers, children, young men and maidens, bachelors and spinsters (*many* spinsters!), all go to school together. 'Late girls' of sixty, even, learn their lessons with touching ardor in spite of white hair and wrinkles."

And then comes the triumphant and jubilant letter of July 12, in which she tells of that turn in her life which was to help her steer into quiet waters at last:

"Hurrah! I have made a superb catch,—not a widower nor a bachelor, but something infinitely superior! I must not anticipate, though, but proceed according to programme. So let me give you the prelude first of what follows.

"The faculty here, overwhelmed by the great number of students in their classes, felt that they alone could not do them justice in their teaching, so they offered some of their sections to a number of mature persons among their pupils. Being delighted at the chance of making myself known, I took charge of a class in elementary German, and I did my level best to satisfy my audience of five. Very soon this audience increased; the principal of a school of languages near by joined the class,

also several Amherst students, divers high-school teachers, and two benches full of *young* girls. My zeal increased, of course. And now, the prelude ended, prick your ears!

"The other day, when I was in my room digging away at my Greek lessons, the landlady brings in three visiting cards, remarking that the three ladies who wish to see me are in the reception room. I look at the cards and read: Miss Alice Freeman, President (in German, *Rector Magnificus*) of Wellesley College; Mrs. Durant, Treasurer; and Miss Denio, Professor of German Literature at Wellesley College. (Wellesley, you must know, is the largest and most magnificent of all the women's colleges in the United States.) I immediately comprehended, of course, that these were three lions [*grosse Tiere*], and I began to have curious presentiments. Fortunately, I was in correct dress, so that I could rush down into our elegant reception room. Here I made a solemn bow, the three ladies returning the compliment. The president, a lady who must be a good deal younger than myself, a real Ph.D. (of Philosophy and History), told me that she had heard of me and therefore wished to see me in regard to a vacancy at Wellesley College, which, according to the statutes, must not be filled by

a man so long as a woman could be procured. The woman she was looking for must be able, she said, to give lectures on German literature in German, and to expound the works of German writers thoroughly; she would engage me for this position, she added, if she found that I was the right person for it.

"I was dumfounded at the mere suggestion of this gift of Heaven coming to me, for I had heard so many beautiful things about Wellesley that the idea of possibly getting a position there totally dazed me. Summoning up courage, however, I controlled my wild joy, and pulling myself together with determination, I gave the ladies the desired account of my studies, my journalistic work, etc., whereupon the president informed me that she would attend my class the next day. It goes without saying that I prepared my lesson with the utmost care. How little did I anticipate the nature of the fiery furnace that was being set up for me!

"When I was standing before my class the next morning in anxious expectation, the president, accompanied by the Amherst professor of German, came in—not, however, to hear me teach my well prepared lesson! 'I should prefer to hear you lecturing,' she said to me with a charming but some-

what artful smile, her big brown eyes dancing with life, 'and so I beg you to go with us to Professor X's class-room. I know,' she continued, cutting me short, 'what you are going to say: you are not prepared to speak before this advanced German class, you don't even know the subject which is to be treated to-day,—but that is precisely why I wish to see you do it.'

"Imagine my confusion! However, I could not very well stand there like a fool, stammering 'I must not, may not, cannot,' and so, steadying my voice, I told Miss Freeman that I was willing to try. The professor then explained that he was discussing the first act of Schiller's *Maria Stuart* with his class, and leading the way into the crowded lecture hall he introduced me to the audience and put a book into my hands. A fine situation this! Here I stood, entirely unprepared to satisfy the critical assembly, with the three Fates in the dim background, and all eyes staring at me. At this crucial moment I suddenly remembered that even old Jansen, the village schoolmaster, had not been ignorant of the subject I was to treat, and a voice within me said, 'Courage! you must know something about it too!' Luckily, I had to begin my lecture with the words of Mary: 'Ah, this unfortunate law, it is the woe-

ful source of all my suffering.' About this unfortunate law many things could be said; in saying some of them I got rid of my embarrassment, so that I did not get stuck; moreover, I had the good sense to direct my occasional questions exclusively to the professors present, by which method I got just the answers I wanted.

"After the lecture I myself felt as a wounded French soldier may have felt after the battle of Sédan, but the Fates, the Fates, were satisfied. They forthwith offered me the position of head teacher in the German Department at Wellesley.... Now you think, I suppose, that I fell round the necks of these angels for joy! I did n't, though!"

No, indeed, she did not. She conscientiously followed the often repeated warning of Mrs. Precht, her guardian angel, *never under any circumstances* to be so un-American as to cheapen her services by pressing them. Like the very sensible business woman into which, gradually, she seems to have developed from this time on, she delayed accepting the offer, agreeing, after a conference of two hours, to visit Wellesley in company with Mademoiselle Sée, the French professor-elect.

About this visit she writes: "We were received with open arms.... The place in itself is so beauti-

ful that we could hardly realize its being merely a school. The Royal Palace in Berlin is small compared to the main building, which in length and stateliness of appearance surpasses even the great Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. The entrance hall is decorated with magnificent palms, with valuable paintings, and choice statuary. The walls in all the corridors are covered with fine engravings; there are carpets everywhere and elegant pieces of furniture; there is gas, steam heat, and a big elevator; everything, down to the bathrooms, is princely. . . . Mademoiselle Sée and I were intoxicated by the beauty of the place, and by the attentions shown us. The fair president actually offered to row us with her own aristocratic little hands across the moonlit lake!"

But there were more substantial attractions in Wellesley for the eager woman than the mere beauty of the place,—however great and entrancing this appeared. For her the personal freedom and independence which the new life promised, the large amount of leisure for private work, the "splendid equipment" of laboratories and library, the association with large, well trained minds, and last, not least, the rare opportunities for learning, studying, growing,—this was the real manna she had

hungered for during all the years of conscious intellectual life. Of course, she was "kind enough" to accept the position offered, although it was not especially lucrative. "But what is a high salary," she exclaims, "in comparison to the ease and enthusiasm with which I can here plow a new field of work! That, and the honor attached to the position, are worth more to me than thousands of dollars. I am to be a regular *grosses Tier* now myself, —what fun, after having been a beast of burden so long!"

In closing this exultant account of her first impressions of Wellesley, she begs her family, "for Heaven's and all Saints' sake," not to use the hated "Cató" any more in addressing their letters, but to remember her pupils, and henceforth call her "Carla," the name she now legally adopts in honor of her beloved father Carl.

And thus it happened that in the fall of 1883 Carla Wenckebach became a part of Wellesley life.

XXIX

"AS I look back to the year of my entrance to Wellesley, 1883, and try to recall my first impressions of Fräulein Wenckebach, I find that the picture which presents itself is not that of the teacher, but of the individual. I see her, not on the platform of the class-room, but at the reception given to the Freshman class. The impression is as vivid as if I had received it only yesterday. She wore a light blue brocaded silk dress, plainly made and ill-fitting. Across her breast was the heavy gold chain with the Maltese cross pendant which she always wore. Her hair was drawn plainly back from her face and wound in a tight braid about her head. She was standing a little apart from the rest, near the door of the reception room, apparently absorbed in watching the passing crowd. One would have expected the thoughtless tongues of the college students to jest at her unusual appearance, but the simplicity, the sincerity, and the strength, which even the most careless observer could not fail to see in her face, worked respect at once."

This description, given by one of the few students who knew Fräulein Wenckebach intimately, faithfully reproduces the characteristic impression

that her personality made on the college at large. A few little items might have been added, perhaps, to complete the picture,—the occasional ripple of joy and fun in the questioning blue eyes, and the surprising youthfulness of her appearance, which so often tempted freshmen into extending cheery "halloes" of fellowship to the little professor. "You are a freshman, aren't you?" one of them said to her at this reception, embracing the blue brocade; "come, let's be chummy; I am alone, too!" The professor, with much hilarity, proceeded to do as she was bid, when the freshman saw light and fled.

With her youthful looks, and above all with her youthful heart, this newcomer was in perfect touch with the "atmosphere of youth and aspiration and high adventure" that pervaded the Wellesley world in the "splendid decade of the eighties." "It was not only that *we* were young," a distinguished alumna writes; "the college was young, too, and so was our president." All these youthful spirits were "flushed with the feeling of power and privilege," and none more so than the sturdy German who after long years of patient and courageous groping had at last found her way into her earthly paradise.

Inspired by the beauty of the task before her, and glorying in its difficulties, Fräulein Wenckebach developed a phenomenal working power. "The amount of mental labor she accomplished in these first years," one of her colleagues writes, "was truly astonishing. One could hardly realize that she ever slept." Before two years had passed she had reorganized the Department of German from its foundation and had filled it with her own vital power. She herself, during those first years, taught every grade of work,—from the most elementary to *Faust* in the senior year, and in doing so sometimes doubled the number of teaching hours falling to her share. She published the first of that series of text-books (*Deutsche Grammatik*, *Anschauungsunterricht*, *Lesebuch*) that were to illustrate and support the "new methods" in language teaching recently advocated by Klotzsch and Lehmann, by Victor Pfeil and other German scholars. These methods, which in their essential features have now gained universal approbation, were at that time tabooed by the colleges on account of their alleged unscholarliness, and they brought down a good deal of paternal as well as hostile criticism on the intrepid professor of German at Wellesley. But filled with the courage of genius, she was not easily

put down, and pursued the way of the pioneer, knowing that she was marching in the vanguard of progress, and that derision would sooner or later change into approbation.

And so it did. It was not ten years after her coming to Wellesley that the president of a prominent New England college for men proclaimed Fräulein Wenckebach to be one of the most distinguished leaders in her field of work,—the reform of language teaching; that at the Columbian Exposition she was awarded a "Diploma of Honorable Mention" for her text-books; and that wherever progress was allowed to enter the domain of language instruction, the "natural methods" were sweeping away the sterile dregs of mediæval tradition.

In all her endeavors to build up a model German Department, in all her struggles with obdurate secondary schools that were loth to give up the old comfortable routine of translation, the German professor was loyally supported by her admired president. Miss Freeman seems to have had implicit faith in Fräulein Wenckebach's pedagogical genius, and to have recognized that her personality and work were of vital importance to Wellesley's reputation and progress.

Ardent in the pursuit of schemes that might serve for the advancement of her beloved college, Miss Freeman soon found ways and means to utilize Fräulein Wenckebach's unusual gifts even outside the German Department. Courses in the history and science of teaching had recently been introduced in a few colleges. Wellesley, too, Miss Freeman decreed, must have its courses in pedagogy, and Fräulein Wenckebach must start the new enterprise. The indefatigable German gladly agreed on condition that she might thereby be exempted from the dreaded necessity of offering her "voluntary" services in the field of religious instruction. The nucleus of a Department of Pedagogy that Fräulein Wenckebach then created soon throbbed, like the German Department, with the life of a personality that seemed endowed with almost unnatural energy and endurance.

"It is madness to slave as you do," her anxious friend and sister Helene wrote to her at this time. "It is a joy to live," responded the indomitable professor of German, instructor in pedagogy, and prolific writer of text-books.

And this new joy of living, felt in the midst of heavy responsibilities, was deep and lasting. "Among all the places I have known, I have never

lived so completely as in the freedom here," she said. "The greatest blessing that Heaven can bestow on mortal man," she wrote in 1886, "is to let him find full satisfaction in his daily work. This priceless gift has fallen to my share, and I feel a deep gratitude toward my Creator, who has rescued me out of my Cinderella existence and has brought me into this Elysium. What a splendid, independent, highly respected position I have here; what unlimited possibilities for educating myself and for exerting a noble influence on others; what privilege to pour into the receptive mind of young American girls the fullness of all that is precious about the German spirit; and how enthusiastically they receive all that I can give them!"

Thus the peculiar problem of her spiritual existence was solved at last. She had found the atmosphere into which her personality fitted, in which the self-contained and solitary life of a scholar that she craved was an indispensable condition of the power over others which her nature imperiously demanded. That these "others" appealed to her less in the shape of separate individuals than in the congregate form of classes (preferably large classes) and other collective bodies of individuals was one of the laws of her nature that Wellesley at last

made clear to her. She fully understood now why she could never have been satisfied as a governess, private tutor, or writer of books even, and she doubly blessed Fate for granting her those conditions of inner peace that have so little to do with our own moral good will. With feeling Fräulein Wenckebach quoted occasionally:

"Vor jedem steht ein Bild des was er werden soll,
So lang er das nicht hat, ist nicht sein Friede voll."

XXX

"EVERY teacher, every educator," Fräulein Wenckebach once said, "should above all be a guide. Not one of those who, like signposts, stretch their wooden arms with pedantic insistence in a given direction, but one, rather, who, after the manner of the heavenly bodies, diffusing warmth and light and cheer, draws the young soul irresistibly to leave its dark jungles of prejudice and ignorance for the promised land of wisdom and freedom." She herself surely practiced what she preached.

"To Fräulein Wenckebach as a teacher," one of her student friends wrote, "I owe more than to any other teacher I have ever had. I cannot remember that she reproved any student or that she ever directly urged us to do our best. She made no efforts to make her lectures attractive by witticisms, anecdotes, or entertaining illustrations. Yet her students worked with eager faithfulness, and I, personally, have never been so absorbed and inspired by any lectures as by hers. The secret of her power was not merely that she was master of the art of teaching and knew how to arouse interest and awaken the mind to independent thought and inquiry, but that her own earnestness and high pur-

pose touched our lives and made anything less than the highest possible degree of effort and attainment seem not worth while.

"She always came into class as if she was glad to see us again, and she never left us without having said something to make one think. I have had light on many problems in life from her words.

"She commanded herself, her work, her students. We girls used to say to each other that if we ever taught we should want to be to our students what she was to us, and if they could feel as we felt toward her and her work we should want no more. She demanded the best of us, without demanding, and what she gave us was beyond measure. Every atom of that sturdy little body, every flash from those wonderful, glancing eyes, that rested no moment on any face and yet seemed continually to include each of us, every tone of that ringing, compelling voice, was instinct with a genius that lifted instruction into teaching, and teaching to inspiration. It was courses like hers that made us feel that college work was the best part of college life. 'Take German,' we used to say to the under-class girls, 'because you will get so much out of it.' We felt tremendous personal pride and pleasure in the department, it was so real and alive, so rich,

and so full of enlarged thought, suggestion, and resource for us. To any one in the world we could point it out and say, 'This is unexcelled. For here is work which bears its own stamp of excellence past the comparative.'"

These testimonies of students may suffice to show what "mere teaching" in Fräulein Wenckebach's case meant to those whom she taught. And what a revelation her class-room work meant to many of her colleagues even! When I visited her classes for the first time I was struck not only by the glad earnestness of her manner, the ingenuous simplicity of her teaching, but also by her truly wonderful capacity for adapting her work to her audience. I heard her teach the same subject in two sections, and was astonished to see how ingeniously she varied the treatment so as to suit the different needs. "She does not understand the art of feeling herself into her classes" (*sich in ihre Klassen einzufühlen*), was one of the most serious criticisms that Fräulein Wenckebach could pronounce upon a colleague. That she herself never taught from a pedestal, as it were, seems the more wonderful because of her marked oratorical gifts. These might easily have beguiled her into losing herself and her listeners in a high flood of words. I am not sure

that during the first years at Wellesley her fondness for lecturing did not occasionally get the better of her. For the good of her dear classes, however, she effectively disciplined herself very soon into applying the more difficult but also more educative Socratic methods. Marvelous, too, was the lucidity, the graphic plasticity, of her presentation of involved philosophical and mystical problems. A philosopher of pure breed, to be sure, might have argued that her comparisons and illustrations from the life about her, that her drawings of geometrical figures on the blackboard, could only check deeper philosophical thought; but even such critics would have acknowledged that, however much she might appear to "weigh down mind by matter," she at least irresistibly touched the springs of practical ethics in her pupils, and forcibly appealed to their spiritual nature. Yet it must not be supposed that she ever sermonized, or that she talked down to her students. Focusing all the rich resources of her nature, all the light she could get from her wide field of reading, on the work she loved, she approached her task of teaching in the manner of a generous host who gladly sees his guests partake of the good gifts wherewith kind Providence has blessed his table. The gifts that

Fräulein Wenckebach asked her students to share with her at their pleasure were generally not her own "original" thoughts,—for she was not, nor did she ever claim to be, an original thinker,—but they were the seeds of intellectual joy and growth which she had gathered from the works of the great of all times. Fräulein Wenckebach's mind to a very large extent fed on books; nevertheless, in her classes she hardly ever made bookish allusions. In books as such she had no interest, nor did she care particularly for the personalities of their writers. What she most wanted for herself and her work were *ideas*,—ideas that would help her to get light and to throw light on the problems of the great and glorious world; systems of thought by which, intellectually, the fragmentariness of our existence could be removed and the "isolated *one* be called to universal consecration." Plato, Boehme, Goethe, Hegel, appealed to her through their ideas rather than through what they personally represented; Schiller and Lessing for the same reason were greater favorites with her than Goethe and Shakespeare.

This tendency of her nature may explain why she preferred to teach subjects that require an idealistic treatment rather than those which presuppose a fine relish of individuality; why she did

not do her best work in connection with Goethe and the more modern writers, for instance, but excelled more in the Lessing course, the historical and theoretical courses, and above all in her course on Germanic Mythology. The latter she created for herself, as it were; it was her spiritual home, the happy hunting ground of her own primitive "heroic" instincts, the congenial abiding place of her own mythologizing fancies and feelings.

How deliciously young she was in this enthusiastic partiality of hers for the world of unrealities, and how the young student body worshiped her for her sunny idealism! When a teacher has succeeded in winning the hearts of her pupils, she gets double credit for all she does. Fräulein Wenckebach was no exception to this. Her students not only revered the great teacher in her, but, in spite of extensive lists of references for collateral reading which she provided for her classes, naïvely believed that all the wisdom of the ages had been originated by spontaneous generation in that squarish head of their admired professor of German.

It was not the least of the bits of good fortune strewn in her way that she happened to be in Wellesley just at the time when her genius was bound to be appreciated. Had she come to the

college some twenty years later, when all the collateral departments had been so much more developed, she might not have awakened the same glowing and undivided admiration.

This general and generous enthusiasm that Fräulein Wenckebach aroused among her students was singularly free from the hysteria which, in the cloistered women's colleges, often pollutes the Parnassus-born springs of hero worship. Self-centered sentimentality seemed to sneak away, as it were, before her impersonal soul,—before the all-embracing impartiality of her mind and the universal cordiality of her manner. Although in her classes she at times dropped her natural reserve, she so tuned the separateness of her individual experience into harmony with the universal, that no one but an intimate friend could have detected the personal note in the voice of common humanity that seemed to speak through her.

Truly, as a teacher, especially a teacher of youth, Fräulein Wenckebach was unexcelled. There was that relieving and inspiring, that broadening and yet deepening quality in her work, that ease and grace and joy, that mark the work of the elect only,—of those rare souls among us who are "near the shaping hand of the Creator."

XXXI

WHILE the free exercise of her rich powers as a teacher and the rare opportunities for intellectual growth thus raised the tenor of Fräulein Wenckebach's existence to a pitch such as it had never before attained, there also came to her that which in late years she had longed for as the crowning glory of all earthly life,—the close communion with a present friend. "The older and more unmarried one gets to be, the more ardently one longs for a heart-to-heart daily intercourse with one, or maybe two sympathetic souls," she wrote in 1884. This craving for personal intimacy was a rather recent development of Fräulein Wenckebach's somewhat self-sufficient spirit. While a girl at school she had cultivated plenty of friendships and *Schwärmereien*, but all had failed in some way to touch the vital springs of her being. Afterwards during her wanderings, there had been no time or leisure to develop intimate personal relations. It was natural, therefore, that she considered close friendships luxuries rather than necessities of life. Her most deep-rooted affections so far had clung round her family, all the members of which she embraced alike with primitive, if undemonstrative, ardor. This

fact may need some retrospective elaboration here, because in the course of her life traced so far a deep devotion to her family has not been apparent. On the contrary, it is evident that she hardly ever made efforts to stay with her kin for any length of time, and that she had not shown herself over-anxious to commune with them through letters. To be sure, she never was a good correspondent, and what letter writing she did she directed almost exclusively to her family; but these few home letters recount the events of her outer life mainly, and rarely—one might say never—touch on things that were nearest the writer's heart. The event that seems to have made her conscious for the first time of the deep undercurrent of family affection in her nature was the death of a younger sister, a sweet girl of eighteen, which occurred in 1880, the first death in her immediate family since that of her twin. The news of it so completely stunned her that she was thrown into a lethargy which she could not shake off without a mighty effort of will.

It was at this time that very intimate personal relations developed between Fräulein Wenckebach and her sister Helene, then twenty-one years old. The latter, an unselfish, ardent spirit, was at home teaching an elder sister whose education had been

neglected, and preparing Eberhard, a winning and gifted boy of nine, to enter an advanced class in some German Gymnasium. Around the development of this boy the thoughts of the two pedagogic sisters hovered with the most loving and eager concern, Helene asking advice and Carla giving it in elaborately and carefully worked-out model lessons. These letters of Carla's reveal a trait that had not found expression in her life so far,—a capacity for strong motherly, or one might rather say fatherly, affection, with a keen insight into the individual needs of the beloved object. They also show that Carla, when she once overcame her habitual reserve and caution, could be the most confiding of friends. The great secret that she let out at once is that of her literary ambitions. We hear her complain of Fate that "gives to writers less chance than it affords to shoemakers of learning their trade." Hungry for criticism and intelligent appreciation, she now sent all her carefully hidden manuscripts to the younger sister, in whose literary taste she apparently had more confidence than in her own; and with gratitude—yes, with humility, even—she accepted the somewhat immature verdicts offered.

When Wellesley had turned Carla's energies in the direction of academic interests, it was Helene

again to whom she confided the discouragements arising from her "ignorance," and to whom she turned for help. And Helene, with Wellesley dawning on her own horizon, went to Berlin to assist her adored Carla by studying Gothic and the old German dialects. In elaborate weekly letters she imparted to the elder sister what she learned from her *Privatdozent.* Soon the plan of the *Lesebuch für Amerikaner* and of the *Liederbuch* was taken up by the sisters, and Helene untiringly helped collect material for both books. At the suggestion of Carla, she also took lessons in elocution of an actor to perfect her marked talent for interpreting poetry, and she attended lecture courses at the Victoria Lyceum, where crumbs of university learning were lately being distributed to an eager and ever increasing crowd of women. Carla, to her bitter sorrow in after years, never realized of course that she was over-stimulating this precious friend and coworker of hers, who was not only frail of body, but was also prone to waste herself for other people. The dear, delicate woman was trying to do what she had seen robust Carla do so successfully,—fill a paying position to cover expenses, and attend to her "higher education" during her leisure hours, which, since she took complete and devoted care of

a half-witted child, were crowded into the evenings. Fortunately the child was removed from Berlin before Helene had quite used up her strength. Carla was then appealed to for help, and wrote by return mail that she would give up her summer trip to Germany to provide the funds for her sister's continued study. Helene's answer is telling: "Never, never should I be willing to accept such a sacrifice! ... And just think what deprivation it would be for all of us not to have you with us this year. If you could see our father's eyes fairly dancing in his head whenever your prospective visit is mentioned, you would not propose such an impossible thing!"

It was at about this time that Carla frightened her shy sister by the announcement that a Wellesley professor who happened to be studying in Berlin was to call on her in a semi-official way. "I have praised you very highly, as you deserve," Carla wrote; "now don't, for Heaven's sake, let your German modesty and timidity spoil your fine American chances. Don't *ever* protest that you can't do this or that, but always say, 'All right, I will do it!'"

And Helene seems to have followed her sister's sound business advice, for not long after this she was appointed to an instructorship at Wellesley College.

That summer (1885) must have been a memorable one for the reunited Wenckebach household: Carla back, beaming with happiness and radiating strength; Helene getting stronger physically at the prospect of working at the side of her heroine; Claus engaged to be married to a well liked cousin (the East Frisians are apt to marry cousins) and ready to reform his "elegant wastefulness;" timid Louise all radiant joy inside over Carla's and Helene's promise to provide the means for her musical education; Emilie, the melancholy twin, coming back to a glad existence again; Mariechen blooming out into a proud young beauty; Eberhard winning honors at his school; Caroline, the golden-hearted and strong, a second Frau Marie; and lastly the Frau Postmeister herself, serenely bent on making life comfortable for her idolized family. The only shadow on the general happiness was the aged father's failing health, and the dim outlook into a future which showed Frau Marie scantily provided for, four sisters unable to support themselves "decently," and Eberhard thrown on the mercy of uncongenial relatives. Unselfish Helene's first thought on getting the instructorship at Wellesley had been: "Thank God, I shall be able now to save my sisters from having to do menial

service." Carla, by some mysterious inner prompting, at which she wondered afterwards, was led to do what, with her dislike to interfere, would seem to have been most foreign to her,—she urged her father that summer to make a will by which the eldest son was enjoined, after coming into the family estate, to pay back to his mother in yearly installments the fortune he had used up in his fourteen years of law study.

In taking leave of their dear family that year, the two "American" sisters promised each other that they would ever faithfully look out for the comfort of mother and sisters. Carla could keep her word. Although not of a saving disposition, she managed to pay larger or smaller sums every year into the family treasury. Louise wanted better musical instruction and a good piano,—Carla paid for both; Emilie needed a "cure" in the mountains every summer,—Carla furnished the means; Mariechen must have money for clothes over and above the yearly allowance of thirty-five dollars that Frau Marie could give to each of the sisters,—Carla provided her with it. Later on, when she saw that her costly "viking" instincts for roaming and her weakness for buying and cutting up costly books would always be in the way of her laying by money, she

forced herself to greater economy by taking out a very high life-insurance policy, so shielding the future of her loved ones once and for all.

The preceding may have made it clear why the presence at Wellesley of Helene—disciple, friend, co-worker, sister—was such a powerful agent in increasing Fräulein Wenckebach's natural vitality and joy of living to the climactic pitch that it attained during the next few years,—years that were marvelous for what she accomplished in the way of learning and studying, of teaching and writing.

XXXII

IN spite of the richness and fullness of experience which congenial work and close companionship with a kindred spirit yielded, life for Fräulein Wenckebach would have somewhat lacked its Olympian flavor if high romance, with its appeal to the imagination and its call for idealization, had not also entered in. This golden draught she was to enjoy in her worshipful admiration of Miss Freeman, whose large and magnetic personality, whose charm and warmth of manner, had fascinated her from the day of the Amherst trial. It was one of the old fits of hero worship that had got hold of her once more, but with an unprecedented intensity this time. Miss Freeman, whom Fräulein Wenckebach, with an affectionate relish, called a "*Teufelchen von einem Seelenschlecker*," and of whom she said that she could never resist the temptation of supporting even the slenderest tendril of love that was reaching out for her, instinctively stooped to conquer, and together these genial spirits rose to the heights of ideal friendship.

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Portrait of 1887

Carla Wenckebach

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notes; "a name which has an echo of heroic days in its musical syllables. You are *ideal* in your friendships, Fräulein; and I—because you gave me once the great name—perhaps I may grow more like the one who must have first been crowned by it. We will hope so. We will all help each other, will we not?" And Fräulein Wenckebach followed but too gladly wherever Miss Freeman called her, —whether the latter stimulated her to highest effort in her classes, at which the president appeared not unfrequently, and which she proudly urged guests of the college to visit; or whether she lured her to receptions and prayer meetings, for both of which Fräulein Wenckebach felt a natural aversion. The free display of religious feeling at the prayer meetings is generally rather shocking to Germans. "How could you go to them?" an astonished friend asked Fräulein Wenckebach on hearing that once upon a time she had frequented them regularly. "Oh," she answered somewhat apologetically, "it was such fun to hear Alice chat with the Lord!" And then she added that Miss Freeman had so graceful a way of veiling the armor of religious conviction that she never once associated her, not even in prayer meetings, with the hated spirit of aggressive Christianity.

The passionate exultation with which Fräulein Wenckebach at first met Miss Freeman's advances, "wise Alice" gradually succeeded in toning down to the true and steady ring of sisterly affection. Each introduced the other to the sanctuary of her life,—her family. Mrs. Freeman is prompted to send Alice's juvenile pictures to say a "Happy New Year" to the friend, and Mr. Freeman makes his daughter write to her "little squirrel" that he "loves her for being so good to his little girl." In December, 1885, Frau Marie is told that Miss Freeman will accompany her daughter to visit Upgant the next June. "I know," Fräulein Wenckebach writes, "how much you dislike having strangers in the house, but I am sure you will gladly welcome Miss Freeman, who in private life is like M., —a happy, childlike nature. She takes a naïve pleasure in little things, and makes no pretensions whatever. She will rejoice in our garden, with its blueberries, its black-, rasp-, straw-, goose-, and mulberries, in the storks, the chickens, and the kittens. Please have the large guest room ready for her, and see that she has a great deal of quiet, for she needs rest." It is clear that Fräulein Wenckebach had not, by this time, learned the American trick of mind-changing, or she would not have been so

sure in December that Miss Freeman would actually visit Upgant the next summer.* I do not know what prevented Miss Freeman from keeping her promise, but I am sure that it was not a change of mind about the new friend.

"One of the most characteristic traits of Miss Freeman," Fräulein Wenckebach assured me once, in answer to my question whether the young president was rightly criticised for vanity and insincerity, "is the great simplicity and loyalty of her nature. Her big heart, to be sure, yields itself easily —too easily maybe—to new claims, but that is only the shadow of the great light in her, which light, after all, is steady and pure in its essence. In her overcrowded life of administrator, lecturer, housekeeper, mother confessor, and what not, she lacks time to cultivate old friendships, but the love she once bore you always wells up afresh when you approach her either by letter or in person. Why do people insist," Miss Freeman's stanchest friend would exclaim impatiently, "on demanding of her what by the very excellence of her nature she is prevented from giving! Why can they not accept

*Gradually Fräulein Wenckebach herself acquired the trick so thoroughly that even Frau Marie, whose vocabulary did not contain an adequate expression for this foreign mental process, adopted the phrase, adapting it to the German for frequent usage by saying: "*Sie hat ihr mind gechanged.*"

her joyfully as she is, instead of bickering over what she ought to be!"

Fräulein Wenckebach, surely, except for one crime that Miss Freeman was soon to commit in the eyes of her devotees, accepted her friend as she was, counting her faults but virtues. "I am made happy, oh, so inexpressibly happy," she confided to her sister, "by the close ties of friendship that have formed between myself and our charming president. She is two years younger than I am, has a classical education, is inspired by noble ideals for the education of women, and has at the same time a great deal of practical ability. She is born to govern a kingdom by the motion of her little finger, and nevertheless she is most touchingly unselfish and simple. I look upon the world differently since I have looked into this golden heart filled with human love, and into these eyes which bear the insignia of genius. There is something wonderfully inspiring about an ideal friendship with a great human being." It sounds almost like an answer to this when we read Miss Freeman's words on a little card she sent Fräulein Wenckebach, showing a design of clasped hands surrounded by a wreath of roses: "When a man loves a woman, it is of nature; when a woman loves a woman, it is of grace,—

of the grace that woman makes by her loveliness and loving-kindness. 'Love understands love,—it needs no talk;' and so I say only, God be with thee!"

No wonder that with this gift of romantic friendship coming to her on top of all the other blessings, Fräulein Wenckebach exclaimed: "I know such happiness *cannot* last, and I am beginning to be afraid of the envy of the gods!"

And the gods, to be sure, did send the trials as fast as the blessings had come. The first great sorrow that came to Fräulein Wenckebach and her sister was the death of their father, the news of which was received on the very day on which Carla had exultingly announced Miss Freeman's prospective visit to Upgant. This was a harder blow for Carla, perhaps, than for any of the other Wenckebachs, Frau Marie not excepted, for she and her father had always stood a little apart by themselves. "Miss Freeman's exquisite tenderness has enveloped us during these sad days," Fräulein Wenckebach wrote home, "and has brought us sweet comfort."

Yet the comforter herself prepared a great grief for her friend, who was beginning to have forebodings that a husband would sooner or later push her and Wellesley into a corner. Miss Freeman seems

to have realized the heartache that she was going to cause Carla, for in the early summer of 1887 she wrote: "I ought to go right away and take a rest, but perhaps I can do better, and of that I am going to write you to-day. So go away by yourself to read my next page. I wish I could take you in my arms and comfort you, sweetheart, as I talk, for you will be very sorry, I know—possibly very angry too; but sometime you will know that I am doing the best thing I can possibly do. For I am going to marry—sometime, and Professor Palmer. Yes, dear, I know you think I ought not to leave the college; you are terribly grieved. You asked me once, but then we were not engaged. As soon as I can, I tell *you*, who are and always will be dear to me. Yes, you will be more dear, not less, and I think you will be glad to have me take a larger, quieter life than I could otherwise have, and a happier, wiser one. When you come we will talk of it, and you will see what I see, because I know without doubting that we do love each other. You will find a place for him in your heart when you know him, and may that be soon! Let us have the best year the college ever had next year. Write and tell me that you love Your little Wolf."

Fräulein Wenckebach could easily comply with

the last wish, but she could not for a long time pardon the "robber." Yes, she was so sure that her beloved Alruna herself would be unhappy, not only with any man in general, but with this one in particular, that she besought Miss Freeman on the evening before her wedding (which took place December 23, 1887) to think the matter over once more and to break the engagement if possible. That wedding day was a stormy one for Fräulein Wenckebach, and the symbol of all her crushed hopes was the handsome blue silk bonnet that Miss Freeman had prevailed on her to buy for the ceremony, which the wind blew into the street mud of Boston and under a carriage wheel. With angry satisfaction Fräulein Wenckebach clapped the sorry-looking thing on her head, and muttering a grim "*So, das wäre abgemacht,*" she marched away from the crowd of amused bystanders. It took her several years to arrive at the sure conclusion that "King George," as Mrs. Palmer proudly called her husband, deserved all the love which his wife could give him. When Fräulein Wenckebach had grown to appreciate Professor Palmer's fine strength, his deep and exquisite feeling, and his broad, philosophical acceptance and appreciation of whatever *is*, she was as proud of Mrs. Palmer's argument

that in disposition her friend and her husband had much in common, as she had been ready at first to resent such a comparison.

How constantly Mrs. Palmer's thoughts were with her German friend is shown by the long letters that she wrote to her wherever she went on her wedding trip. They came from London and Lucerne, from Paris and the "blessed land of *ich* and *mich*," and they are full of love and anxious concern. Unfortunately there was reason for great anxiety, for Fräulein Wenckebach, soon after Mrs. Palmer had left her, had been crushed by the hardest blow that had yet struck her. In the early spring of 1888 her tenderly beloved Helene had died of consumption, and she herself had escaped the disease only by the most heroic efforts of will. She never afterwards could bear to speak about Helene's death, but referring to it in a letter written in 1890 to an old school friend, she says: "I should have answered your dear letter of three years ago, but a great affliction, the death of my darling sister, who was also my faithful, inspiring comrade in work and play, almost paralyzed me, so that I myself fell dangerously ill. Now health and new pleasure in life have returned to me, but deep down in my heart the cruel pain keeps on gnawing." A student friend,

who knew Fräulein Wenckebach before and after this experience, says: "Her love for her sister Helene seemed to me the deepest affection of her heart, and I never thought her quite the same after Fräulein Helene had left her."

XXXIII

IT was about a year after Helene's death that a young German woman, who was to become the last and perhaps the most intimate friend of Fräulein Wenckebach, was urged by a Wellesley instructor to visit the college and to present herself to the Professor of German, who wished to fill a vacancy in her department. In what follows we shall largely quote from the reminiscences of this fond but critical person. "I had heard Wellesley criticised (very unjustly, to be sure)," she begins, "as a most bourgeois and bigoted place, but Fräulein Wenckebach was described to me as a delightfully odd and unconventional lady. So I decided to accept the invitation. My first impression of Wellesley I can recall but dimly at present, but I shall never forget my amazement at first beholding my future chief and bosom friend in her den. At that period of plain living and high thinking in the college history, the professors had to do all their studying, sleeping, and a large part of their administrative work in one and the same room. I was familiar enough with Bohemian quarters, but I had never before seen a room like Fräulein Wenckebach's. The furniture I did not notice especially,

except perhaps a huge desk over which towered rows and rows of brass-lettered pigeonhole frames; it was the color scheme which left an indelible impression on my sensorium,—the red portière, the off-red desk cover, and the yellow tint of the walls; the plush table cover of peacock-blue, with its border of green and gold; the bookcase curtains of pink cotton; and, most startling of all, the blood-red carpet, the crying counterpoint in this mad medley of color tones. There were funny gimcracks, too, of which I remember a shining toy bicycle, and a brass cornucopia that showered artificial flowers on a china cat; there were family photographs in heavy gilt frames, surrounding a large reproduction of Sichel's theatrical Medea; and there were books and manuscripts everywhere,—piled up in corners and spread out on tables and chairs. When the friend who had introduced me had left the room and I had cleared a seat for myself, I sat down opposite the professor, who had all this time been majestically enthroned on her high desk chair, her feet supported by an enormous hassock, her shapely hands resting on her knees. How plainly I can see her there now! She wore a red velvet dress with a large flower pattern stamped on it, and a juvenile red sash around her waist; and she was sparkling

with gold or some kind of yellow metal that glistened in her finger rings and bracelets, in her dress buttons and the beads used for a ruching. With bewilderment my eyes traveled down the length of her heavy gold chain, and up again from her waist to the enormous brooch,—a gold dollar surrounded by spikes,—to fasten at last on that wonderful square head of hers, with its crown of short blond hair which bristled up over her fine brow like the crest of an alert bird. I smiled a supercilious smile, I fear, when this funny little person began to talk to me, but I soon forgot her surroundings, bent on listening to her voice. It was a voice like the one I had heard during my childhood days,—a voice which in its strength and sweetness lent such beauty to the beloved mother tongue that in listening to it I felt something stir deep down within me. In the course of the conversation I became more and more conscious that I was in the presence of a rare and powerful personality, and this impression of power, associated with Fräulein Wenckebach's strong neck and jaw, her fine, firm mouth, her determined chin, her habitually clinched fists, and her clear, starlike gaze, almost drowns the memory of her musical voice and of the gentle, graceful motions of her body.

"Again I visited her during that year, this time shortly before she went on her annual summer trip to Germany. Grief and unlooked-for care suddenly devolving upon me had shaken my health and courage, and I had come to cancel my contract with Fräulein Wenckebach and the college. Again the professor was in the chair in front of her desk, and I before her. Between sobs I told my story, Fräulein Wenckebach listening patiently, but without offering a single word of comfort. When I had regained my self-control at last and looked up, I saw the most rigidly stern expression on the professor's face; and her voice sounded hard, I thought, when she informed me, in a somewhat husky though business-like tone, that she would try to interview the person I had recommended to take my place, but that I should have to keep to my contract if that lady was not satisfactory or would not give up her position in Germany. How I wished after that interview that Heaven might keep me out of the German Department at Wellesley! Fortunately it did not, and so I had the chance of correcting my misjudgment of Fräulein Wenckebach's character, and to understand that what had seemed to be rigidity and lack of sympathy was in reality the opposite quality,—an over-great softness of heart against

which a reticent nature had to protect itself by putting on the shield of coldness and indifference."

Nothing was harder for Fräulein Wenckebach than a verbal expression of grief or of loving sympathy; her natural instinct in the face of sorrow made her want to take refuge in absolute silence. In this, as in many other things, she changed during the latter part of her life, but in her letters of comfort to her family on the death of her father and of her sister this trait of hers comes out strongly. She resorts to phrases that are as painfully conventional and as commonplace as those of any obituary sermon or newspaper notice. Nothing, perhaps, shows this helplessness more pathetically than the consolatory presents she sent from New York to the twin sister,—a picture of Mary, Queen of Scots, and the coats of arms of the American states! The family of course never noticed the slightest incongruity in such gifts of Carla's, and they received her trite expressions of grief and her hackneyed words of comfort in the same reverent spirit with which they would have read printed eulogies of their dead in the daily papers.

But it was not grief only that found her helpless in expression; love, too, made her appear as shy as a boy and as awkward as a puppy. In some way this

may account for the fact that the friends of her heart's choice (there are not half a dozen of these in her life) have all been of the more demonstrative and impulsive type,—people who were able to take the initiative in matters of personal relation. Although the friend quoted above was decidedly of this type, Fräulein Wenckebach could not, for some reason or other, manage to get on terms of intimacy with her. In comic despair she appealed to a former school companion who happened to be at Wellesley that year, and who afterwards reported the conversation she had with Fräulein Wenckebach on the subject. "I am very fond of her and I want her for my friend; I think she likes me, but there somehow seems to be an obstacle to our having it out. How can I manage this?" the professor had asked appealingly. "Why," was the answer, "just tell her that you are fond of her." "But how can I, when she is so embarrassingly respectful to me all the time?" "Well, don't say anything, then, but simply give her a hug." "That 's more difficult still because I am so short and she is so tall, and as soon as ever I stand up, she rises too." "Why, then, mount your hassock and do it." This idea must have struck the little professor as a happy one, for—we quote her friend—"she actually did mount her has-

sock one evening, bent apparently on measuring her shortness by my height. I thought this a rather queer performance, and the meaning of it never even dawned on my dense perceptions. At last, however, Fräulein Wenckebach did manage to make me understand and respond. It was in my room, where a student protégée had just poured out a heart-rending tale of sorrow to us. I sat on my couch at the side of the sobbing girl, with my right arm around her, and Fräulein Wenckebach in a chair opposite. While I was bending over the girl I suddenly felt something rub against my left shoulder. The professor had softly slipped over to my side and was trying to put her head under my arm. I smiled through tears and clasped her tight."

The friendship which then developed between the two women was one of those rare ones that nature and grace at times seem pleased to produce,— a thing made of the "texture of wine and dreams," and at the same time fashioned of the "tough fibre of the human heart." Emerson, the bard of noble friendship, might have rejoiced at the truth and tenderness, at the simplicity and wholeness, that distinguished the relation of these "very two" who could be "very one;" whose friendship possessed "that rare mean betwixt likeness and unlikeness

that piques each with the presence of power and of consent in the other party," and who, in their ideals as well as in their common walks of life, disagreed but to agree.

XXXIV

PEOPLE who did not know Fräulein Wenckebach well might have judged that to agree with her was a very simple matter, for she seemed so even and calm of temperament and so fair and sane of mind. That there were rocks beneath the surface of her everyday serene manner, and shallows and tangles as well, only the initiated were privileged to surmise. The truth is that under a flow of bright non-partisan humanity her personality was considerably hemmed in—strong personality often seems to have to pay in this way for its very strength—by limitations such as decided idiosyncrasies, prejudices, and partialities. There was, first of all, the prejudice of the East Frisian, the descendant of a pure and proud race, against people of an alleged "impure" stock,—people with sallow skin and coarse black hair, for instance. This racial feeling of physical *malaise* that the gypsy type seems to evoke in the blond and fair-skinned Frisian was strongly developed in Fräulein Wenckebach. It may in part account for the fact that she never would have anybody in her corps of instructors who was not, to a certain degree, personally attractive to her, and that in thus seeking for

congeniality of nature she was sometimes willing to overlook deficient scholarship. The tribal exclusiveness of the East Frisians, which even in our day makes some of them refer to people outside their own narrow borders as "Germans," never affected her in the least. To make up for that, however, she had a pronounced aversion all her own to anything disfigured, diseased, or morbid. To stay in a sick-room was torment to her. Once when her friend was ill with blood poisoning, Fräulein Wenckebach, to be sure, heroically forced herself to attend to the patient's wants, but she did it with sedulously averted eyes that she might not see the badly swollen face. The sight of a degenerate type of ear-lobes or teeth was especially painful to her, and she could grow quite melancholy over these defects in people whose looks she otherwise admired. For she was exceedingly sensitive to the charm of physical beauty, particularly to that of the blue-eyed and blond type. To her dying day she cherished this fondness for handsome blond humanity; yes, one of her very last wishes was to have *das kleine Reh* (the little fawn), a student protégée of hers and of her friend's, sit where she could look at *die hübsche Miese* (the pretty pussy). In the cars or on the ocean steamers one would sometimes see her nod with

smiles and big bright eyes to some fair stranger, and many are the passing acquaintances formed through this her frankly expressed delight in personal beauty. It is a curious fact, however, that the same thing made no impression on her when it had been reproduced in art.

Unmoral pagan instincts like those mentioned above might easily have interfered with the highly responsible calling of the teacher. But Fräulein Wenckebach's great sense of duty and justice, her tact, reserve, and perfect self-command, made it possible for her to harbor these feelings without ever giving pain to anybody except herself,—to her students, surely, she never betrayed them.

Prejudices on a somewhat different plane were those she felt against people with an affected manner. Affectation was so absolutely foreign to herself that she could not even get the enjoyment of the ridiculous out of it. The genre of the *poseur*, however, her dramatic instinct made her relish keenly, and she never lost a chance of practicing her remarkable talent for inventing nicknames on this variation of our species.

More serious disaffections in her nature were those against the sententious or precise, the scholarly pedantic, or the narrowly pious. These *Regelmen-*

schen (rule men) and *Tatsachenseelen* (fact souls), as she called them, were practically the only people who could rouse her to active antagonism,—an emotion she did not enjoy because her nature was supremely conciliatory. She had little patience, moreover, with persons who were constitutional shirkers of duty. I shall never forget the wrathful indignation she expressed once on discovering that one of her new instructors, an "annual" in consequence of this discovery, habitually neglected to prepare herself for her class work, and that the classes—the sacred classes!—suffered from this neglect.

There was a good bit of naïve masterfulness in Fräulein Wenckebach, too,—a trait which came out most strongly in the monarchical ruling of her department. From her childhood up she had been accustomed to see people follow wherever she should lead, and so she had quite naturally fallen into the habits of a leader. When I knew her first she never even thought of consulting her teachers about the distribution of work or about methods, materials, and text-books to be used. She herself furnished all the text-books,—good and bad,—and she took infinite pains to make each of her instructors thoroughly familiar with her own indi-

vidual ways of teaching. Thinking that she had discovered in the author a talent for "development questions," she set her to work out minutely a scheme for all the questions and answers that were to be used in first and second year conversation work. I had to write out the questions neatly in black ink and the answers in red, and this elaborate guide every instructor in elementary work was obliged to follow. No wonder that the German Department at that time was likened to a body which had "one head and many hands," and no wonder, either, that "hands" with a head of their own did not always enjoy the game, unless of course they were heart and soul in sympathy with the methods pursued.

But the remarkable thing was that most of Fräulein Wenckebach's co-workers in the department never even dreamed of doing anything different from what their genial "chief" wanted them to do; that, on the contrary, they gladly put themselves under the sway of that unobtrusive but impelling will of hers. To be sure, there was something almost irresistible in the very *Selbstverständlichkeit* (matter-of-courseness) that marked all her actions and directions, something that suggested the foundation laws of nature herself; and it took an unusually

independent cast of thought and will even to conceive of opposing what was felt to be so perfectly normal and natural.

XXXV

DESPITE the lingering roughness of the primitive and pagan in Fräulein Wenckebach, the dominating principles of her spiritual existence were plainly those of charity and tolerance, of sympathy and tenderness. Nature had been kind to her in shaping her mind on larger outlines than most. Gifted with a rare freedom of soul resulting from her lack of introspective self-consciousness, and blessed with that objectivity of view which in its very essence makes for harmony and peace, she often could forbear and calmly let things take their course where people more intensely subjective would inevitably resent or interfere. Never was there another person so unable to bear malice, or so difficult to persuade that she had been dealt with unfairly. A few incidents may serve as illustration. Certain relatives of hers had invited the "Professor," on whom they looked with approbation, and her young sister Marie to visit them in M. on a return trip from Paris. The Paris train was to arrive in M. at four in the morning, but the "dear cousins" were enjoined not to appear before half past eight, the time when the servants would have completed their preparations for the rising of the

household. Now Fräulein Wenckebach was as keenly sensitive as anybody to the discomfort of waiting long hours in the smoky and noisy railway station; and impatient wonderings as to why the tired travelers could not be allowed to spend the time comfortably in one of the guest rooms of their hosts' magnificent suite did trouble her mind at this juncture; but she repeatedly exposed herself to the same kind of treatment before she decided that she would not visit in M. any more. Angry words, however, never passed between the kinsfolk, and her accounts of this inconsiderate conduct were calm statements of facts rather than derogatory comments. While visiting these relatives she adapted herself with perfect good humor to their "freaks," as she called some of their vanities. With a chuckle she told how for their sake she had to arrive in M. second class, changing from third just before reaching her destination; and how with their covert help she would contrive to depart in the same manner, in order to avoid hurting the sensibilities of these would-be aristocrats who always traveled first class, and who would have much disliked being seen to associate with a plebeian who stepped out of or into a third-class railway compartment. During the last years of her life, when Fräulein Wenckebach herself de-

veloped some fondness for the "higher" comforts of traveling, she once crossed the ocean in a *chambre de luxe* of an express steamer. Although she liked this experience immensely, she was not willing to repeat the expensive experiment, because this one trip had more than served its purpose, she said, in making her understand people's predilections in that direction. With Fräulein Wenckebach, to understand was to forgive. Insults directed against her own person she did not even need to understand before she pardoned, because she forgot them with such astonishing ease. Wrong done to others, or, sometimes, errors which involved the serious discomfort and unhappiness of those committing them, affected her deeply, yet her grief or indignation seldom moved her to interference. In her letters from New York she had repeatedly expressed sorrow over the joyless life to which honest Mr. N. N.'s rigid insistence on perpetual work condemned his children. Asked by her sister of aggressively altruistic temperament why she did not exert her influence to improve conditions, she replied: "A governess must never imagine that she may govern or that she has a 'mission' to fulfill; where there are parents she ought always to consider *them* the responsible party. It would be useless,

moreover, to force new ideas on people who have reached their full mental development. Common sense and the knowledge of human nature forbid me to interfere in such cases. Just suppose a governess came into our family who felt it her sacred duty to educate Miki and Eber into orthodox members of the Lutheran Church. We should simply turn her and her sacred duty out of doors! Herr N. N. wishes to make good work-horses of his children; a work-horse is his ideal: has he not the same right to his ideal that you have to yours? Nobody wants to shatter his own idols in order to replace them by those of other people.... Interference, you know, is not in my line anyway. My neighbors see how I live; if they conclude that my way of living is superior to theirs they will imitate it without my having to preach to them. To 'missionarize' people who are not on or near your own stage of development generally does more harm than good. ... You are different and must, therefore, go about things in a different way; and yet, might you not spare yourself some headache occasionally, and avoid premature gray hair, by showing a little more trust in the efficiency of Him who, after all, is the responsible maker of this world and its creatures?" Her own imperturbable confidence in the ultimate

rightness and goodness of things helped, no doubt, to give Fräulein Wenckebach her power of restraint, her remarkable willingness to wait for natural results. How one admires, yes, envies these qualities, but how relieved one feels to remember that nevertheless this calm sage could act at times as rashly as any blustering enthusiast! On the whole her mind was toward trusting nonresistance and quiet adaptation, which may to some degree explain the curious fact noted before, that in spite of her robust and vigorous personality she hardly ever roused antagonism.

The ease and grace with which she suited herself to things and conditions as soon as their *raison d'être* became clear to her is especially striking in connection with her career at Wellesley. Although she found on the whole that life in the College Beautiful corresponded to her first enthusiastic conception of it, it presented certain aspects which for a time sorely disappointed her; above all the fact that even in this "stronghold of sound learning," as she had called Wellesley, ideals of scholarship had to be pursued against many and strange odds. Young America's disdain of exact knowledge, its easy disregard of accuracy, and its impatient clamoring for palpable results caused some per-

plexed surprise to one who by temperament was a most thorough student. Other difficulties that she felt in the attitude of the college authorities and of the public—as the unacknowledged yet obvious worship of numbers, and the premium put on the work of organizer and administrator above that of the constructor and scholar, with its resulting tyranny of routine over life—baffled her own intellectual aims. The whirl of trivial activities delighted in by the versatile American girls, and permitted by the administration to invade the solitude needed for study, was peculiarly alien to her mental habit.

With amazingly quick insight she grasped the idea of the American college as a general training field for life, in distinction from the purely scholarly intent of the German university. Recognizing that the college was a healthy and timely product of national growth, she never even tried to urge university methods on her students, whose need, she found, was "humane assimilation" rather than proficiency in a few separate branches of knowledge. She soon became convinced, moreover, that the decidedly practical bent of the American and his marked soberness of mind needed to be counterbalanced by æsthetic culture; that the training of

his powers of observation and of his logical faculties was less essential for his harmonious growth than the development of his imaginative and emotional nature; that the cultivation of sympathetic imagination would protect a fatally prosperous people much more effectively than exact scholarship against the threatening bane of sterile self-content.

One of her first friendly counsels to me was to stop being "thorough" in the German sense of the word. "You are teaching a race," she said, "that likes superstructures much better than foundations; so beware of boring your students by an over-insistence on groundwork or detail which, constituted as they are, they cannot but resent as unnecessary pedantry. *The* important thing is to have the student's interest and sympathy. Stimulate the dormant powers of fancy; let your students hear, see, and feel what you teach them. Their intellects need greater warmth, intenser color,—expansion, not concentration, which is the discipline required for the dreamy and intellectually luxuriant German nature." And playfully she would add: "In this land of prepared and predigested foods you will find very few students willing or able to use their own teeth and stomachs for the cracking, chewing, and

thorough digestion of those hard nuts of knowledge wherewith sound scholarship must be fed."

Forced or "hothouse scholarship" she merely tolerated and never encouraged. "The true scholar," she said, "like the true teacher, is born, not bred." "You cannot make a nightingale out of a chicken, even if you try ever so hard." She smiled indulgently when people called *her* a scholar. "I am only a teacher," she said, "which, on the whole, I like better than being a scholar." Her own text-books were products of her leisure hours, and work on them was never allowed to interfere with her prime interest of teaching. One of the minor prejudices she harbored was directed against those instructors who neglected their duty to their classes for the sake of doing some indifferent piece of "original research work." "The crying need of this country for cultured and devoted teachers is not met by the breeding of an army of indifferent scholars. Let us learn to revere the teacher in us and others, and let us give ourselves in single-minded devotion to our calling; there is none higher." To this calling she gave herself with a vigorous delight that inspired all teachers who came in contact with her with a new sense of the dignity and joy of their vocation.

Fräulein Wenckebach's gentle sympathy—to return once more to the leading motive of this chapter—showed most delightfully in her conduct toward her students, especially the dullards. She did not, to be sure, give the latter much chance for expressing themselves in class, because she disliked to spoil the even tempo of a recitation, but she never conditioned a girl of slow wits or kept her out of advanced work so long as there was true interest and serious purpose to counterbalance the dullness. To deal out moral advice or to fling censure at a student after a failure, she considered a highly "ungentlemanly" procedure. Toward teachers, particularly those of secondary schools, she was kindness and helpfulness itself, and *never* was she known to show discourtesy to people in lower stations of life.

The exquisite tenderness of her nature found its most beautiful expression in her love for the animal world. She could never pass a kitten without stroking it affectionately. At her touch the cats invariably began to purr, and they followed her just as the dogs did. Squirrels ate out of her hand, and birds did not seem to be afraid of her. Mice made her nervous, yet she suffered agonies whenever a trap had to be put in her room. Her friend

relates how one day she saw the "Professorchen" in her desk chair and a field mouse in the chink of the door, gazing at each other out of big round eyes. When the mouse had at last retreated into its hole, the professor quietly removed the trap so that the tiny fellow creature might not be caught in it. Bats she feared. "With a nervous little cry for help," her friend says, "she once waked me out of a sound midnight slumber, gasping out to me that there was a live velvet cap on her skull. When I had lighted a candle, I saw her sit upright in bed looking as white as a sheet. But when I jumped out of my own bed to chase the bat away, she whispered, 'Please don't frighten the poor creature.'" There was almost a Hindoo reverence in her for all organic life. Mosquitoes and their like she did kill with a vim, to be sure, but the lives of beetles or caterpillars, or even of spiders, she never willfully destroyed.

A peculiar indication of her tenderness was seen in her treatment of babies, who smiled and babbled at her, although she always touched them gingerly with pointed fingers as if they were made of Venetian glass. One of my dearest recollections is seeing her act as godmother to Carla Margarethe, her friend's infant niece,—the tall clergyman in black cassock

and white frill standing in front of the baptismal table on a small platform in the German parlor, and Fräulein Wenckebach before him, holding the cooing baby as reverently as if it had been the Christ child himself. I knew then what is meant by the saying that the very strong only can be very gentle.

XXXVI

THE first impression that Fräulein Wenckebach made on even the most casual observer was undoubtedly that of vigor, of a wonderful reserve force. A stranger needed only to see her walk through the corridors of College Hall with her firm, quick step and her straight, soldierlike carriage, to appreciate the appropriateness of the pet name of "Little Bismarck" that the students had given her. And this impression was heightened when one heard her talk. Although in ordinary conversation her voice was very gentle and melodious, it took on a "ringing and compelling" quality whenever she used it for significant speech. She could only talk her best—another proof of her vitality—before large audiences. Small classes distressed her, and she never lectured to them without exercising her imagination to fill the class-room with a large body of students. But it was in her enunciation more than in her voice that the forceful energy of her nature expressed itself, especially in her pronunciation of English. She never would learn that the English *p*, in words like psychology and pneumonia, was not an explosive as it is in German, and she energetically insisted on awakening the dying

final *d*'s and *s*'s into their glad old Teuton sound again. It was partly this heroic force of utterance, coupled with her vividly picturesque way of putting things, that rendered her English so attractive to many people, and that made one overlook the lack of style and polish which in a measure characterized her use of a phenomenally large vocabulary.

Students and Faculty alike were aware that Fräulein Wenckebach was a great worker, that she carried a heavier programme of academic appointments than any of her colleagues, and that in addition she managed to write or edit at least one book a year. Yet they met her at all entertainments the college provided, and saw her go frequently to Boston to attend concerts, or, in German opera season, to rush for her favorite seat in the Olympus of the Boston Theatre. The bigger the crowd that surrounded her, the more exhilarated she felt, and the great shops of Jordan & Marsh or R. H. White at Christmas time, or the Food Fair on special "show" days, were her favorite relaxations during the academic year. "If you will spend an hour with me at Wanamaker's I will go to the picture gallery with you," was a bargain she once struck with a friend of more aristocratic instincts. Bad weather never kept her from going anywhere.

The stormiest days found her out walking or skating, while heat, on the other hand, easily exhausted her. This may partly explain her extraordinary fondness for the cool, dark woods in summer. But by instinct she loved these, and it was good to be with her when in reverence and silence she walked under the green vaults of the German forests. At those times it seemed as if the tree cult of her Teuton ancestors rose up in her once more. The forest was the only place where she ever loitered, —not to pick flowers, for these she hardly noticed, but to listen to the birds and to fill herself at leisure with the "divine atmosphere" of that giant creation. Out in the world, she "rushed," especially after she had lived in America, and some say that in this respect she was more American than the Americans. To be sure, one can hardly think of her as anywhere but in the front or on the top of things, as *allzeit voran*. I myself like best to picture her in the first row of a crowded hall, or on top of Mt. Vesuvius and the Great Pyramid, on the Eiffel Tower at the Paris Exposition and the Ferris Wheel of the World's Fair at Chicago. Such great fairs offered a tremendous attraction to her imagination, which always hungered to take in the whole world possessed by human brain. One of her day-

dreams was to go round the world, but she knew that she would never save money enough to have that dream come true, and so she went to the World's Fairs instead, taking now her student brother, now her fair young sister Marie, in whose joy she found her own doubled.

To keep on going at the pace that her temperament required she needed plenty of food and a great deal of sleep. Her hearty appetite was one of the "foreign" traits at which the college world smiled indulgently, and her capacity for sleep used to be the envy of her friends. "I shall die if I can't get a short nap right now," she once shouted to her traveling companion, dropping on a bench near thundering Niagara; and sitting erect, with the waters roaring in her ears, she immediately dozed off into a gentle slumber.

If she had not been such a cleanly little body she would hardly have thought it necessary for comfort ever to take off her clothes. No one ever saw her in wrapper and slippers, for the simple reason that she did not own these commodities,—"outgrowths of an effeminate civilization,"—and with the exception of the short period of her afternoon nap, when she took off her heavy shoes, she was in boots and spurs all day long. There was a touch

of the heroic in her way of dressing, too, for the patterns in dress goods, the buttons, cravats, and hats she chose, would have been suitable for a six-footer rather than for a small personage like herself.

Her mental robustness showed especially in her marvelous power of concentration, which made it possible for her to work on board a crowded steamer with the same ease as in her private study. It also appeared in her remarkable capacity for quickly sifting and systematizing large masses of material such as she wielded for her wonderfully comprehensive work in pedagogy, or for the courses in the history of literature which she treated on a broad basis of *Kulturgeschichte* (history of civilization), as her excellent *Meisterwerke** and *Literaturgeschichte** sufficiently show. From her ever fresh enthusiasm, nourished by life in general and by great personalities, music, and "ideas" in particular, and from her never failing power of inspiration, one could gather how keenly alive she was in her emotional and spiritual being.

Occasionally, to be sure, a strange fit of listlessness would overcome her. During those times she was content to sit in her large Morris chair and dream. "What is it, Professorchen, that you are

* Text-book published by Heath and Company.

thinking of?" her friend asked her once on seeing Fräulein Wenckebach's face lit up by one of her "deliciously retiring" smiles. "Oh, something great and noble," the answer came. And questioned more closely, she confessed that frequently during these sporadic attacks of laziness, she held interesting and inspiring converse with her "heroes," —sometimes with Buddha, or Jesus of Nazareth, or Plato, but more often with Odin, Balder, or Brunhilde, who was her special favorite among the great types of women. At rare intervals she could be depressed, too, for like most of us she had "miseries" in her nature. But when this mood came upon her, she betook herself to bed to fight it in silence; "for," said she, "it is indecent to pour your own soul mud over some innocent fellow being." Her physical indispositions she treated in the same heroic way. Once she slipped on the frozen lake and badly sprained her wrist. While she was still in acute pain a colleague called to express her sympathy. "But was n't it lucky," she responded with undaunted spirit, "that I had my skating before I fell?" For the few serious diseases that had gripped her during her life she felt genuine awe and respect, but she had a shamefaced way of confessing to any "despicable little ailments" such as

headaches, rheumatism, and the like. As soon as any of these tried to get hold of her she drove them away by the magic of wonderful medicines which she had seen advertised. New inventions in machinery and new patent medicines had been her two prime interests at the industrial fairs ever since her arrival in America. In New York she found a wonder-working remedy against headaches, which she took regularly and which she sent to her family with minute descriptions; then again she discovered a potion that "relieved one of all rheumatic pain within an hour." The little doses of medicine that sometimes were prescribed for her by the health officers of the college she regularly doubled or trebled, never minding whether they were arsenic or sugar pills, aspirin or brandy, "for," she said, "these American doctors don't know what a German constitution needs." Somebody justly remarked that Fräulein Wenckebach treated her watch more carefully than her body. She surely did not guard her splendid constitution, but unreasonably, yes, recklessly, undermined it.

The first serious turn in her health occurred in the spring of 1897, while she was lecturing to a *Faust* class. "Something in me," she said, "suddenly gave way." Was it a blood vessel in the

brain, or a muscle of the heart? That was never ascertained because she refused to consult a physician. She was like one struck, and with difficulty dragged herself through the remaining months of that college session. During the next year, which was her "sabbatical," when she "loafed" and gave way to her passion for wandering, she rallied and to all appearance regained her former strength; but to her friends she was never quite the same. Old age seemed suddenly to have laid hold of her and to have stayed that wonderful vitality. This was doubly sad in her case because she hated old age and felt a bitter grudge against all the little outward signs of it, especially against her gray hair. Cut out for eternal youth, her nature so far had hardly given her a chance at laying by that fuel of resignation which comes with uncertain health and stands us in good stead when the winter of life sets in. Like Balder, paling at the appearance of the frost giants, she shivered at the thought of becoming what with tolerant contempt she had often commented on as a *verlöschende Seele*,—an anæmic soul,—that lacks the incentive of animal vigor as well as the flames of enthusiasm and inspiration.

The protective instinct of love that surrounded

her to the last tried in many ways to shield her from the realization of her failing powers, but could not completely hide from her the humiliating fact that others were doing her work, and that in the management of the department, as well as in the planning of new text-books for new methods of teaching, the "head" had become a "hand."

In the fall of 1902 it became evident to the college that Fräulein Wenckebach was ill. She herself never complained, but incidentally something would betray all,—a sigh, perhaps, over the strange weariness in her mind; or, after a wistful look at the life line in her hand, a remark about the shortness of it, and about the accompanying signs of "death in a foreign country;" or, most pathetic of all, an occasional expression of gnawing homesickness for Germany. Of late years her former enthusiasm for a democratic government had completely given way to a hearty recognition of the blessings of a monarchy such as Germany represents, and one of her fondest hopes was that she and her friend might some day go back to live in the Fatherland, "the land of order and soul, of culture and intellectual integrity."

A few days before Fräulein Wenckebach's death, which occurred on December 29, 1902 (three weeks

after Mrs. Palmer had died in Paris), her friend told her of arrangements to take her home to her mother and sisters as soon as she could be moved. The light that kindled in her blue eyes as she pressed her companion's hand in gratitude revealed more than any words could have done. But she soon knew that the journey was not to be, although she never mentioned death. On the evening of the night which was to be her last, she called the friend to her bedside. There was a short but passionate clinging to existence in the person of her comrade; a whispered thanks for all life had yielded; a deep sigh of resignation to the bitter task of dying; then a quiet settling down to fight the fight manfully,— no fears, no lament, no tears; courage and strength unto death.

Her brave, laborious, joy-illumined days
  Made up a rosary that saints might tell.
The child heart in her, loving life, gave praise,
  Unto the Lord of Life. And all is well.

For should she speak a broken speech above,
  A little foreigner, unused to wings,
The angels will but stoop with swifter love
  To answer all her eager questionings.

Oh, loyal to the Truth, we of the quest
  Salute thee, scholar soul! Our reverence lay
Before thy steadfast patience, quenchless zest,
  And bid thee Godspeed on thy lonely way.

KATHARINE LEE BATES

Portrait of 1898

Carla Wenskebach

Portrait of 1898

Carla Wenckebach

THE general and spontaneous grief that was felt over Fräulein Wenckebach's premature death promptly found expression in countless epistolary tributes from far and near, in commemorative meetings and addresses, and in a number of dignified and lasting memorials.

Early friendship in the Fatherland has dedicated a large bronze relief to her memory. It is placed in Fräulein Wenckebach's dear old Hannover Seminar, where it will remind future generations of alumnæ of "the German woman who in foreign countries bore witness to German character and learning."

The Faculty of Wellesley have expressed their love and high esteem for their colleague by the gift of a bronze tablet—now in the college library—bearing the significant motto of *Allzeit voran* (Always in the front).

The Wellesley Alumnæ have honored the memory of the true scholar by presenting to the college a Carla Wenckebach Fund, whose income is to be used for the purchase of books and music for the Department of German.

On the spot where their revered professor lies buried,—a "lonely height" in the secluded cemetery of the town of Wellesley,—loving students

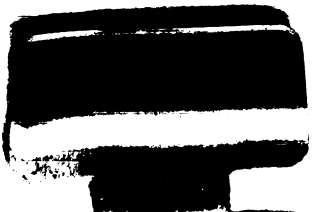
have erected a worthy monument. The simple unpolished stone of exquisite grain, symbol of her character, bears the inscription:

"Wer immer strebend sich bemüht
Den können wir erlösen."

"(Whoe'er aspires unwearièdly
Is not beyond redeeming.)"

It is her favorite motto from *Faust*, and best expresses her own "quenchless zest" for deeper knowledge and higher development.

And now, at last, closest friendship in America, the home of her choice, offers its own memorial,—the story of her life and character. May this story revivify her memory to those who knew her. May it also shed some faint afterglow of that "highest bliss" that was throbbing in her and emanated from her as long as life was hers.

Love asks no more.

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